ST. PETER'S CHARTER AS PETER READ IT

T. H. PASSMORE

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AS PETER READ IT

BY

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"And he went out—and departed to a Different Place."—ACTS xii 17.

"What, then, was become of Peter?" ACTS xii 18.

"But I am of Cephas!"—1 COR i 12.

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ST PETER'S CHARTER

INTRODUCTION

I

UNDER the title foregoing I offer to Christian judgment an essay in the reputed problem of our Lord's Commission to St Peter, as determinant of the disputed question of his status in the Church of God.

My aim in this quest is to discover the true and original nature and content of this Commission, as intended by our Lord ; as interpreted and discharged by St Peter ; and as conceived and accepted, under such discharge, by the Apostolic Church which formed its first objective, and whose estimate of it is therefore its first criterion.

And my field of search is that corpus of written records, immemorially and universally accepted by Christendom as the official archives and minutes of its origins ; finally selected as such, after four centuries of prayerful and studious deliberation, by its œcumenical decree ; and always and everywhere honoured by the Christian body as delivered, at least essentially, by Divine inspiration.

No other authentic or authoritative area of research, to my knowledge, presents itself to the

explorer in such a question. Tradition I respect; but still more the values and proportions of evidence: and in the case of the precise line of enquiry we are to pursue, tradition is not only (with perhaps one exception) peculiarly untrustworthy for reasons which will be obvious, but practically superfluous to our purpose; for prior and better evidential material abounds and runs over; and by the time we have arrived at our conclusion and begun to deck it with circumstantial arabesque, we find our chief trouble to be less paucity of data than *embarras de richesses*. Who would go groping among streets and alleys, after he had found "treasure hid in a field"? And our treasure, save to glamoured sight, is not even "hid." The spell that hides it is upon the eyes, not upon the ground; and the spell is tradition itself.

For the same reason, and *a fortiori*, I do not concern myself with post-Apostolic history. Long ere I have done—in my humble judgment—there is no case for that jury. Did my enquiry turn out inconclusive, the matter might have been different. As the event proves, not only do I discover myself under no sort of need to consult subsequent conceptions of the Petrine Charter or pretensions based on them; but I find in my field of search, after proof, such an infinity of connotation and corroboration, so many ramifying paths of interest and beauty, that I am disposed to dig myself in. I mean that, in such a theme, neither the limitations of a book-cover nor the "dusk of life that's left" would permit more than a very little of excursion—and that, I fear, in a spirit of most foregone judgment—

into the *ex post facto* region of modern controversy, or even, with all reverence, of patristic opinion.

Am I sounding an arrogant trumpet? I do not feel that way. Personally I always accept it as the one heartening sign, in my poor study of these things of God, that I have reached the stage of awe. But in honest conviction I will yield to none. Show me the flaws in my structure, I will bow and thank pull down and try to build better. The man that sees, and keeps silence, may have a thousand strengths on his side. But he who sees, and sets out to tell his vision, what shall it profit him if he waver in the telling, or deprecate his eyes? Does his hearer wish to be fed full with his humility? And shall that be called humility, when a man sows a plain tale with feigned misgivings?

That, then, is my quest: light, and the only light, upon St Peter's status and relation in the pristine Church—the light of the mind of Christ who shaped him for it and imposed it on him; of his own conception of it and the course of conduct which he based thereon; and of the attitude observed towards him, in and concerning such conduct, by the colleagues who had intimately witnessed his relations with his Master "from the very first." If in this triple light the question cannot be settled, it may be shelved for ever; *a posteriori*, it is inaccessible. Any system based upon a solution of it unverified or refuted in that light, whatever assets of sanctity, learning, or pageantry it can adduce, stands—like Peter himself at Antioch—"self-condemned".

Personally, my own conclusion is reached in pages 39–119; and proves to be a very plain

and unequivocal finding indeed. Of its soundness as a *sequitur* from the premises, the reader must judge. Should it stand, it stands against the dearest belief of three hundred and twenty-five million living Christians. That I can in nowise help. It would be simple affectation to ignore the hostile craft that beset his keel, who would embark on any honest discussion about St Peter. Yet he will steer none the better for a lowered flag.

For though I have frankly from the outset made my own the challenge in which the very nature of my theme embroils me, my most malign intent is to make the port of truth; and my tactics, if I have been guilty of a few broadsides in the transit, must be arbitrated by that law of love which is international to all Christian controversialists. Truth in her wars need own no debt to charity; by sheer construction, she destroys; and if those who fall upon her to their weal or woe are broken, she falls on none—save those who pull her upon them.

The Roman Catholic Church, considered as a system based on a distinctive theory of Christianity, has been said to be a structure so flawlessly logical that no razor-blade of dialectic could find lodgment in a suture of its masonry. This is a position it would be very troublesome to dispute. Happily the task outlies the need of those who realise that the supreme canon of architecture, as of transit by omnibus, is "Safety First". For I doubt not that the man who built his house upon the sand, built a beautiful house, and one masonically sound from the top to the basement: the trouble, when

the rains descended and the floods came, lay in the soil in which the house was founded. And what is wrong with the venerable and surely beautiful pile of which I speak, is the fallacy of the theory in which it inheres.

As a child I sometimes found amusement in building a grand tower of coloured bricks. In the base I would first set one tiny cube awry, that the whole edifice might depend on its precarious edge. Against the joy that followed last—the crash that came when gingerly I drew away the brick—no toil seemed tedious. There is poor joy in arguing down any man's soul-dwelling about his ears. Neither need we look for any angel to descend and cast the Papacy like a great millstone into the sea. That is not God's way.

Yet the fact remains that at the base of the fair rotunda of the Papal claims there lurks a falsity, set vitally to the upbearing of the building, whose subduction—and all that is false is doomed to be rotted, expelled, or blasted out of its place in being—would cause the whole fabric to fall and be broken like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors.

What is that fallacious substructure? It is not Blessed Peter. The trouble with the Papal pagoda is not that it is built upon Peter, who is the ordained foundation of the Kingdom of God, but that it is *not*. It is built upon a false Peter; a Peter who never was. It is built, not merely upon a perversion, but upon an inversion, of the function of St Peter in the Apostolic Church, as devolved from the authority of Jesus Christ; discharged by St Peter himself; and accredited to him in certain documents

approved as the sole extant contemporary history, and venerated by the Church of Rome herself as the inspired annals of the nascent Church of God—and as the source of her own pretensions into the bargain.

The which position it has been my aim to disestablish; not by invective against the error, but by demonstration of the truth. This I have attempted in the First Part of the present book; which I may call *The Argument*. And the Second Part, which follows the Argument, may be called *The Corollary*. This, though by far the greater part of the work—and to the author immeasurably the more interesting—is confirmatory, but in no way essential, to the demonstration which precedes it.

Its theme is a certain psychological aspect of St Peter, ordinarily unapproached because undiscerned, but indispensable to any serious study of his person, character, and function in the Church. So luminous, from this aspect, is the true place of his Commission in our Lord's design, that I cannot reconcile its honest exploration with the survival of any slipshod error in that matter—supposing some residue of such hypnosis to have outlived the plain evidence of facts.

In pursuance, however, of this second line of thought, I shall have to invite the reader into the more spiritual realms of exegesis, not once nor twice; and he must bear with me if we find need, at certain stations of our course, to tunnel right beneath the letter into those catacombs of hidden meaning, to which St Paul (Gal iv 24) has given the authoritative name of "allegory"; whose entrances were for-

gotten when the Fathers fell asleep; and whose very existence beneath his feet the fashionable modern exegetist is proud to ignore.

And further, I must crave a vote of confidence, if in this ultra-spectral light I have occasion to exhibit Blessed Peter as an ordinary man beset with human frailty, and vulnerable to temptation, even beneath and despite the ægis of the Apostolate. For it must needs appear that the Pentecostal Fire did not, as seems to be assumed, anneal him soul-proof suddenly and utterly; that the old weakness of his spiritual fibre, foreknown on earth and still and ever tended from heaven by the leechcraft of his Lord, was never healed until for the second time he "girt his fisher's coat unto him, and cast himself into the Sea". For so strange a diversion of his steps, if he follow me so far, I ask of the reader an advance of faith. I shall be content if he here reflect, that a victor's agonies are the measure of his victory; and that none can constrain another's vision, for seeing is an act of will.

Yet a third indulgence (seeing I have taken it upon me to plead) may save for sanity my judgment of sacred inspiration. For in large part my interpretations of the New Testament assume the pregnant import of the letter. Phrases and words are treated often and again as significant, two-edged, portentous; their recurrences are noted as reminiscent of the old scenes of their former contexts; as motives, keynotes, cues for situations. In the First Part my tale is so direct and plain, that such subtleties and shades of meaning are hardly called

to witness ; it is in the Second that the secret clues are gleaned, the fine threads picked up and tracked.

Let it not then be argued from such curiousness, that I am an indiscriminate or obscurantist believer in " verbal inspiration ". I have too awful a conception of inspiration so to cheapen it. The Æolian harp of man's mind is a clumsier and a frailer instrument than they suppose, who deem it capable of mechanical and sustained reaction to the Spirit's breath. I believe that along the track of the New Testament writings the control varies infinitely ; that there are parts where human self-consciousness, human error, hinder and occlude the afflatus of the Divine.

But I believe intensely that there are parts—in the Johannine writings notably, and in the earlier chapters of the Acts—where the mental medium has been hushed into special quiet ; where Wisdom, flowing through the surrendered pen, has distilled itself in very words. He who has much conversation in the Scriptures should cultivate the subtle intuition which can sense the presence of this *numen*, this troubling of the waters, this descent of Life into the womb of thought. And these directer intervenings, these almost dictations, appear to me to group themselves especially about the presence and person of St Peter.

To the Pelagian genius of these days, the idea of inspiration (if it claim to come from any source more reverend than some wandering spook or maundering spirit, or to any more responsible person than a young lady afflicted with queer nerves and a redundance of spare time) raises absurdity to the

power of delight. Spiritual hebetude has this in its favour, that it enlarges greatly the field of the ridiculous. Yet it may be there are still left seven thousand in Israel, who think that God knows Greek —yes, and English too—and is as capable, when need occurs, of materialising a thought in words, as He is able to clothe the lilies of the field in fairness.

Still another of my *farouche* procedures calls for apology. I find St Peter a character in history. I have therefore dealt with St Peter as presented by that history, and not as accommodated to any system of religious or other preconception. In a word, I have not bowdlerised, but respected, the eschatology of the New Testament.

St Peter is a prominent figure in a religious movement, which arose in Syria nineteen hundred years ago. An essential principle of that movement, as taught by its Founder and promulgated by His immediate followers, was the imminence of a certain group of events, stated as impending in the spiritual and physical planes, and expected within the lifetime of contemporary living persons.

It is almost unanimously assumed—indeed it may be called the single point upon which the whole of Christendom is agreed—that these events did not happen. Upon that point I may be allowed my own opinion. Seeing that the events in question are invariably and emphatically referred by their heralds (save as regarded their echoes and effects on earth) to the plane of the spiritual[1] and the invisible ;

[1] What of the extraordinary supernatural portents, so vividly described as attending the Doom of Jerusalem ? (Tac., *Hist.* v 13 ; Jos., B. J., vi 5 ; Eus., *H. E.* iii 7.

that they were plainly announced as the consummation, not of the Christian dispensation, but of the Hebrew as fulfilled in Messiah; and that their physical and visible phases, within the time and in the manner proposed for them, did duly and in detail supervene: it may be allowable to differ from this negative but universal creed of the followers of the Lord of Truth. As to my own vision of the matter (which is entirely definite) were anyone sufficiently interested to enquire about it, I should be happy to inform them to the best of my ability.

Meanwhile, my sole point is that I am not here concerned with the question. The critic of a phase of history has nothing to do with events posterior to its scope. All I say is that I cannot and will not follow the accepted fashion of ingeniously editing the predictions in question, or depleting their meaning in the supposed interest of Him Who is responsible for them.

Herein I am guilty, I know, of the worst of heresies. For I am refusing incense to that "Catholic" assumption, that "Jesus did not come"; a fetish before whose altar the Church and the sceptic world are made friends together; and in whose name the enemies of Jesus pulverise His claims, while his friends emasculate His words. And indeed, were I a worshipper of this same Grand Negation, I should not long hesitate between the two. I hold a Schweitzer, in condemning Jesus of Nazareth at the bar of His own eschatological commitments, entirely within the rights of critical logic. He is unconsciously obeying the Divine direction of Deut xviii 21–22.

It is, however, not my business to make any assumption either way; only to study St Peter. I find his whole life and work, his whole relation to his Master, inextricably bound up with this Parousia-outlook. If I try to tear him from the eschatological matrix in which I find him embedded, I shall disintegrate him in the process. To cut that living flesh which is Peter out of the body of Christian origins without shedding the all-permeating blood of the first Christian hope, I am no more competent than Shylock. Studying Odin or Thor, shall I expurgate the Edda, because history records no Ragnarök? I did not invent the Parousia. My quest is for the real Peter; the Peter of history. Peter's Lord, I believe, stands in no need of any ingenuity of mine.

And in fine, if upon this act of rash agnosticism the reader have not already in orthodox horror closed the book, I have one more grace to ask of him. It is, again, in regard of an assumption; but this time of leave, not to waive one, but to make it. And what I wish to postulate—not for my Argument, which is not concerned, but vitally for my Corollary—is the early date, the unity, and the Johannine authorship, of the Apocalypse.

II

The history of pious nonsense opposes a high record to competition, even in the twentieth century. But most serious thinkers will acclaim its supreme plateau, both of range and standard, in that mass of extant literature which claims to reconcile with our

intelligence the Bible's last and greatest Book. And small wonder. For Israel is in bondage; and it is another instance of that most pitiless of all despotisms, the tyranny of an idea.

The Apocalypse is a Letter; and when you tear a letter out of its proper context of time and circumstance and try to patch it into a later page of history, your retribution lies at your own door. The triad of cataclysm, in Jewry, Christendom, and the Roman Empire—the Doom of Jerusalem, the Neronian Persecution, and the vials of anarchy and bloodshed whose outpouring upon the Imperial world, after the death of Nero, are described in the History of Tacitus—is not difficult to locate. This appalling period bestrides, to the eternal vindication of the Prophet of Olivet, the last seven years of the seventh decade of our Christian era; the watershed of human history, but streaming with blood and fire.

If then you take the palpable textbook of this stupendous Day of Judgment (written when "the Great City, where the Lord was crucified"[1], was still standing with its Temple) and dislocate it, say at the very least, by thirty years; what sense do you expect to make of it? If you take "Babylon" (its choicely-appropriate metonym for Jerusalem, the Adulteress-City of the Prophets, whose complete destruction it describes) and read into it "Rome"—which never "sat upon" (xvii 3) its Emperor, and was not destroyed by Nero, and never yet was destroyed at all; and transplant the writer into the epoch of Domitian, when nothing remotely answering to a word of his screed transpired or

[1] Rev xi 8.

impended, except a persecution well outside the range of Christian eschatology: you have burnt your exegetic boats. Then, what refuge have you, but in flights of sanctified stupidity; in ingenious romances of "spiritual perspective", of "Laodicean ages", trumpet-periods, seal-epochs, and "times of the Gentiles"?

The nightmares of superstition are passing; but they are giving place to the awakening of unbelief. And faith and unfaith, devout distortion and critical cynicism, alike are fathered by the tyranny of a chronological myth—and grandsired, I wonder, by that same old and reverend axiom, that "Jesus did not come"?

That is, we know, a forbidden subject. But it need not transpire. If you can read the Apocalypse without thinking of the brands of Nero, who is actually named in it; of the Christ-bidden flight of the "Woman", the Judaean Church, from the forty-two months' siege and doom of Jerusalem, which is described only *not* by name; and of the fall of the Temple, which is "measured" for destruction, and then "opened in Heaven": then there need be no bound to the credulity to which your innocence of imagination will expose you. Still more, if you can deem its "seer" capable of seriously predicting these disasters a quarter of a century after the events; or of distracting a few worried Christians in Asia with frightfulness about a twentieth-century "Nero Redivivus": there can be little limit left to your confidence in his vapidity—or in the credulity of your public. When shall we learn to temper that spiritual reverence—or unspiritual curiosity, as our

case may be—in which we approach uncommon mysteries, with common sense ?

I have little space for detailed defence of my postulate ; the issues which I draw from it later in this work may commend it better than any attempted abstract of the case in its favour ; which is accessible to all students of the Apocalyptic problem. Let a few considerations suffice.

The Domitianic date rests purely and simply upon Eusebius' personal interpretation of an ambiguous statement made by Irenæus ; whom, with his master Papias, Eusebius himself considered both credulous and inaccurate ; and whose own " interpretation " of the Book may well be hailed as the archetype of the whole tradition of wild confusion which his chronology has begotten. This Irenæan allegation of the late date, taken up obediently by Jerome, Victorinus, Sulpicius Severus, and the rest, wore out for itself a channel in the valley of orthodoxy ; and remains to this day the safe and respectable view. Another and a very different stream of tradition, which I should imagine rose from a considerably earlier and more responsible spring than the mind of St Irenæus, ran to earth. Its re-appearance connects itself with the great name of Sir Isaac Newton ; and later with Westcott, Hort, and Lightfoot, and other Cambridge giants of the last century.

Let us first name the Muratorian Fragment, perhaps contemporary with St Irenæus, which makes St John to have been St Paul's *predecessor* in writing to seven Churches of Asia. Next, St Jerome's uncer-

tainty as to Tertullian's reference of the persecution of St John to Domitian or Nero. Next, a title-page in the Syriac version of the Apocalypse—lacking in the Peshito, but evidently descended from the ancient Syriac Apocalypse which Ephrem Syrus quotes—stating that St John was banished to Patmos by Nero. Again, Epiphanius (*c* 375); who twice definitely ascribes John's banishment and Apocalypse to the reign of *Claudius*. And Andreas and Arethas (500–550) who both name the tradition that John describes the Doom of Jerusalem.

Here is not much to show. But there is at least clear evidence that the Irenæan *ipse dixit* did not have the field to itself. Which makes Dr Swete's assertion surprising, that "early Christian tradition is practically unanimous in assigning the Book to the last years of Domitian" (*Apoc.*, Introd., IX 1). The followers of St Irenæus in no sort of way establish his testimony; they prove nothing but its wide acceptance.

And, among all books ever written, this Book's date is its paramount and indispensable key. And I submit that the true solution of the Apocalypse was lost, and the Book itself largely forgotten, in the reaction of the new age which succeeded its fulfilment; that it was re-published in the time of Domitian, when the renewed stress of persecution revived its spiritual relevancy; that in the highly non-literary period that followed in the Church, it came to be regarded, if at all, as a product of that later crisis; and that Irenæus, writing a hundred years after, vaguely reflected this popular view—without really knowing much about the matter—

and set seventeen centuries of posterity forcing a hampered lock.

I believe the Book to have been written towards the end of the reign of Claudius; or, at the latest, early in that of Nero, in the "Quinquennium"; say A.D. 50–56. The first thing we notice is the crude Hebraic Greek, often ungrammatic; which argues a Jewish writer native to Aramaic and as yet unpractised in Greek; and which yet, both in form and in thought, so strongly suggests the hand of St John as to foreshadow development into the smooth simple diction of the Fourth Gospel; as when, turning from a man to his picture as a boy, we see the germinal promise of what he has become.

Again, the whole Christian ideality of the Book, though formally Catholic, has a stern Hebraism behind it; it is Hebrew prophecy in solution; the imagery is purely Jewish; "Jews" are contrasted with "the synagogue of Satan" (ii 9); the "nations trample" the "Holy City"; the nucleus of the Redeemed are gathered from "the twelve tribes of Israel", the polyglot multitude are secondary (vii 4–9). The whole Book is the swan-song of Judaism as it dies into the new Reign of Messiah; but it is a Jewish song.

Other and later Apocalypses have breathed a similar spirit. But can we imagine the sending of so reactionary a composition to the churches of Ephesus, Colossæ, Laodicea, forty years after St Paul had preached there, thirty years after the Epistle to the Ephesians? Or its presentation to Christendom at all, when the Jewish Economy and nation had been dissolved for a quarter of a century?

Taking it all in all, the late date would make of this magnificent Script the strangest anticlimax in the history of human thought.

An important factor in this connexion is the obvious verbal reference, in the Letter to Thyateira (ii 20, 24) to the terms, and to the very wording, of the Jerusalem Decree of Acts xv 28, 29: which was an emergency-measure in view of a transition; and as such, with the rapid Catholicising of the Church, would have soon sunk into obsolescence. Such an appeal, then, at the end of the century, would have been unthinkable. If so, the Writer's standpoint cannot have been very long after A.D. 49–50.

Another indication is the insistent and pointed provision for the identification of the persecuting Nero—one of the "seven heads" of the Imperial Beast—that he would be one who had been "wounded to death with a stroke of a sword", and "lived again" (xiii 3, 12, 14); which has nothing to do with the much-overdone "return of Nero"—an insult to the Writer—but is meant to make the Tyrant recognisable as a second edition of Caligula. The infamous Caius Caligula, worst of former Emperors, predecessor of Claudius and uncle of Nero, had been killed with a sword-stroke in the neck and jaws; and it was this Caius whom Nero was proud to make his model. "Nero took his uncle Caligula more and more for a pattern; of whom Josephus says (*Ant.* xix 1) that only his sudden death saved the Jews from extermination" (Döllinger). Of what use such an identification, then, unless it were given before Nero's time, or at

least before his frightfulness became the terror of the world? To this, the Claudian date answers best.

Further, in xvii, we have, again, these "seven" Imperatores. Here we are told that the sixth is reigning, and that the last is to be at once a seventh and "an eighth"; which can only mean that he will be one person in two successive characters. This bi-phasic Emperor, in his final development, will be "the Beast that was, and is not, and is about to come"; that is, again, he will reveal himself as a second Caius. And the meaning of his being a seventh "and an eighth" is that Nero would "for a little time" (the first ten years of his reign) be innocuous to God's people; then he would assume his Apocalyptic rôle as Persecutor; destroy (causally, through Vespasian) the "Harlot" Jerusalem, which he had been "supporting" (16, 3); and "go into perdition".

We need not press the "seven" Emperors, any more than the "seven" Churches, or the "seven" Trumpets or Vials. The Book is one great "seven"; it is a round Apocalyptic number. You may count Julius, if you will; Josephus does; the Jews did: and even Pompey, or any name in which Judaean domination by Rome began. The point is, not the beginning of the series, but the end; and, if "five are fallen", and the seventh-eighth be Nero, the sixth and reigning emperor must be Claudius.

Let us face the *raison d'être* of the Book. Let us for once step free of that terrible critical edict

which allows us to discover, in the Spirit's work, all things but the Spirit, and dare a little faith and common-sense. Assume that the Book relates to the events of 64–70. If it be subsequent to those events, it is an interesting imposture, and unworthy of our present enquiry. This, however, is incompatible with its spiritual majesty. We conclude then that it is prior to those events. In that case it is a prophecy. That prophecy is not impossible, some Christians will still admit. If then it be a prophecy, it must have been written *well prior* to the events. The object of prophecy is repentance and hope. A prophecy on the actual eve of its fulfilment is too late: judgment has begun; it admits no time for spiritual preparation.

Now the programme of the Apocalypse is the eschatological programme of our Lord. It is a nearer view of the cycle of happenings which He predicted—the cataclysm which was to consummate the Hebrew Dispensation. Waiving its spiritual phases, there is no doubt whatever that that Consummation, in the plane of phenomena, duly happened, forty years after our Lord's departure. It is reasonable then to suppose that our Lord would arrange for a fresh utterance of warning before the close of so long a period of probation. The natural place, in the period, for such a renewal of warning, would not be at its close, but about its middle point.

Accordingly we find our Lord announcing, in an eschatological parable, that "At Midnight a Cry was made". Midnight is the mystical name for the middle of the period of probation, which He called "night" (Jn ix 4, xi 10, Rom xiii 12). The

"midnight" of the Apostolic Epoch was about A.D. 50. A fresh warning when Nero was beginning to persecute, or when Vespasian was marching on Judaea, would have been pointless. In the early fifties, however, its fitness would have been exquisite. It would serve as a textbook, during the remainder of the interval, for the expectant Church; it would, above all, dispose the faithful, when the Great Tribulation should come, to that "losing of the life for His sake" by martyrdom, which Christ Himself so strongly urged.

All these are the avowed objects of the Apocalypse. Written, for obvious reasons, in prophetic cipher, it is my belief that the Book formed the *enchiridion* of the Apostolic Church for twenty years. Certainly it is quoted, under transparent disguise, in almost every Epistle of the New Testament. The promises and warnings of St Paul, St Peter, and St James, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, are saturated with it. Not only is it the ubiquitous subject of direct citation, and even of veiled mention by name ("The Apocalypse of our Lord Jesus Christ", "The Crown of The Life", "The Last Trumpet", "The City which hath The Foundations", "The New Heavens and the New Earth", "The Jerusalem which is Above", "The Gift that cometh down from the Father of the Luminaries", "The Day of the Lord", "The Apocalypse of The Lawless One", "The Working of Satan with Lying Wonders"); but such a household word is it upon Apostolic lips, that in my own exhaustive collation I have found the difficulty of excerption lies, not in the luminosity of allusion and association, but in the fineness of

the penumbra of contextual thought. That this has practically escaped observation is not the least of the wonders of exegetical perspicuity. Not only to the teachers and writers of the first age, but to the Church at large, the Book must have been a child's catechism. When once you have shaken off the delusion about its date, you see it everywhere.

Plainly the whole question of the Apocalyptic date and aim turns upon the meaning of " Babylon ". Let us consider this. The identity of the City is a " Mystery " ; on seeing her, the Seer is greatly puzzled (xvii 5–7). Where then was the " mystery ", if Babylon meant Rome ? Rome was precisely what would occur to everyone ; and that was just what was intended ! The idea of Rome's destruction would be regarded as mere fanaticism ; it would excite nothing more dangerous than a smile ; while a Jew would enjoy it. To suggest the annihilation of the Holy City was a different matter. Here indeed was need of camouflage.

And well, it appears, was the secret guarded. The " seven mountains " are a purposed " blind " ; " Here is the mind that hath wisdom " ; for they are " seven kings " too ; how then could Rome sit upon its own Emperors ? The Woman is " sitting upon " the Beast ; how could Rome sit upon Rome ? But Jerusalem truly sat upon Rome ; for Rome, her suzerain, supported her ; her political existence depended upon the will of the seven-hilled city. Another blind is the statement that this " great City has a kingdom over the kings of the earth (Land) " ; but Ps ii 2 and A iv 26 should explain

who these were—simply the rulers of Palestine. The " mystery " was an astuter one than is reckoned. For it has blinded, not only the Jewish persecutors of those days, but all posterity !

Again, " Babylon " was a Harlot. She had been unfaithful to her Husband. When was Rome ever married to God, that she should be judged for " committing fornication with the kings of the earth " ? Do not Ezekiel and Hosea teach us who this " Adulteress " is ? And does not our Lord ? " An adulterous generation ", He said ; and did not its Herods ever flirt with Rome, to the betrayal of its Divine Husband ? And where would be the point of calling one heathen city by the name of another ? whereas we find Jerusalem nicknamed after every pagan city in turn—and, in this book, introduced as " Sodom and Egypt, where the Lord was crucified ".

The Apocalypse is a " Tale of Two Cities " : the one is destroyed, the other enthroned ; the one is the Adulteress, the other the Bride ; the one has a Temple, the other's Temple is God ; the sanctuary of the one, " measured " for destruction, is sublimated into the other—which, " measured ", is found to correspond. Of these two, the second is the " New *Jerusalem* ". What can the former be, but the old ? Are the two not contrasted in Gal iv 25, 26 ? And would a " new Jerusalem " rise like a phœnix from a burning Rome ?

In the dirge of ch xviii, which is a mosaic of the Prophets, are named, among the demolished riches of this great City, all the things required for the Temple worship ; every component of vestments and sacred

vessels, with " cinnamon, spice, incense, ointment, frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep " ; it is a sacristan's list pure and simple. The list of the spoils taken from the City, given by Josephus, might almost have been transcribed from this chapter. These things are described as marine merchandise ; Jerusalem, we shall be told, was not on the sea ; but neither, for that matter, was Rome. The wealth of the world was brought to the seaports of Judaea ; Josephus speaks of Jerusalem's " delights that come from the sea ".

The City's doom of " death, mourning, famine, and fire " comes upon her " in one hour ". Is not the " Jewish War " a paraphrase of all this ? and does history record the utter destruction of any other great city in this way, and at this time ? Or shall we grope for the mystery in the days of Alaric ? Seven times in the Book is " The Great City " named : in the first of these it is identified, for it is called the scene of the Crucifixion (xi 8) ; in the rest, it is " Babylon ". Could light be clearer ? " The Beast shall hate the Harlot, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her utterly with fire " : shall Rome's own emperor hate Rome, and eat and burn her ? Or are we seriously referred to the story of Nero's fiddle—which may have happened ? or to his return with the Parthians, which never happened at all ?

Lastly : " In her was found the blood of Prophets and Saints, and of all that have been slain in the Land ; rejoice over her, ye Saints, and Apostles, and Prophets ". Peter and Paul ? no doubt ; but what of John's own brother James, and James the Less ? and what Hebrew Prophet perished at

Rome? And did not our Lord say "Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets—that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the Land"? What doomed City, save one, is the centre of His warnings? The whole Bible is a history of Jerusalem: with its close, Jerusalem's death-throes gave birth to our heavenly Sion: shall the world-old story, written for our learning, find its climax in the fall of *Rome?*

And now, as to the unity and authorship of the Book, what argument can I offer more cogent than my own sincerest wonder at the question? What can the most encyclopædic scholar tell us, but his opinion? And when we come to that, is Christian intuition to be allowed no contribution? That surely is a ground of opinion too; and though it may be incommunicable, I wait to learn why it should be negligible. Suppose, when we have heard all about what Papias says, and what Dionysius says, and about John the Presbyter, and weighed it against the Catholic tradition, we throw our sixth sense into the scale, and say "Scio, quia sentio"? In the absence of proof, is not that as good as the infallibility of the very latest of opinions? is it not at least better than an agnostic shrug?

In that pale penumbra, which as Bergson says surrounds the searchlight of the intellect, and is more original than reason because it is life's pure sympathy with being, we place every day a hundred problems of personality and life. Ultimately our problem is of this kind. As the blind grope, so are we fain to feel, it may be feel the better in com-

pensation for our blindness ; as disarmed men take to their naked fists, so is our battle one of intuitions at last. May not the humblest join in—and wield his own ?

For in this Book I sense unity ; and that absolute. I see the exquisite order, the unfolding of vision out of vision from the beginning to the end, the perfect return of the end upon the beginning ; and every scene a fugue upon some key-phrase sounded in the last. Translating the poetic grandiloquence of Eastern apocalyptic, I find the Book the thrice-told tale, from three points of view in heaven and earth, of the two-and-forty months of cosmic anguish, during which the world's Old Dispensation travailed with the New. And, from first to last, is the continuum of an ordered evolution.

First, the great Proem of Commission, in which the Messiah appears in His Parousia-character, and gives his charter to the Seer. Then, the Letters to the Churches, with their exquisite foretastes of promise and warning all gathered, like flowers from a garden, out of the climax of blessing and doom which the last pages reveal. Then, the Seal-Vision, the Programme of the whole action, giving out its seven selective *motifs* of the threefold Crisis which forms the main theme of the Book.

Then, out of the Last Seal, the three Crises—Jewish, Christian, and Imperial—begin to unfold ; three parallel but different episodes of the great three-and-a-half years of judgment, each culminating in a pseudo-climax which dissolves into the prelude of the next scene. These are : The Jewish Crisis—the Trumpets ; the Christian—the Persecution under

the Nero-Beast and the False Prophet of Emperor-worship ;[1] and the Imperial—the Vials. After this, the three deferred Climaxes of the Crises : of the Jewish Crisis, the Fall of Babylon-Jerusalem ; of the Imperial—the mysterious Har Magedon ; of the Christian—the Judgment of the victims of Nero.

The vindication of Messiah being now complete, the expected revolution is effected in man's spiritual relation to God. Satan is "bound"—restricted[2] in his organised power of evil ; and the Bride-City descends to earth. That is, there is a definite but invisible change of Dispensations. God draws near to man.[3] The plane of humanity passes from the feudality of Satan into the freedom of the Christian Polity, the Kingdom of God.

And the Seer closes, with exquisite peroration, upon the dominant of his overture—the unity of the scenes he has unfolded, the vital interest of the "Churches" in their imminence, and a final anathema against all and any who shall tamper with the literary solidarity of his work.

Thus (without entering upon the supernatural manifestations) it will be seen that the Apocalypse is nothing but a renewed announcement, in nearer

[1] Wonderful is the revelation of the spiritual link between the first and second Crises, in ch xii : which shows us Satan's true object in the Siege of Jerusalem—the destruction of the Jewish Church therein ; his fury at her instant flight (Jos *Bell. Jud.* II xx 1 ; Eus *H. E.* iii 5) ; and his consequent raising-up of Nero to persecute Christians across the "sea."

[2] Against a future organised revolt—and a final quietus.

[3] The "Descent of the Bride," which completes the Parousia, is simply the definite inauguration of the reign of Christ over the earth-sphere. It is not the end of the Christian Dispensation, but the beginning. "Kings," "nations," evil, and "healing" continue (Rev xxi 24, 26, 27, xxii 2).

and clearer focus, of that "Consummation of the Age" which Christ announced; mistranslated and misunderstood, by an invincible perversity, as "The End of the World"; the great cosmic spiritual travail, in which the Jewish Thorah and the dominion of Satan were to give birth to the establishment of the Kingdom of God in heaven and earth. And that this, the Scriptural scheme of Redemption, is involved in the integral unity of the Book: which opens and closes on the keynote heard all through—"The things which must shortly come to pass".

The Apocalypse is an organism. Dislocate its close-jointed limbs from their processes; stretch it upon a Procrustean bed of futurism; above all, tear it from its environment in time: and the reward of your piety or learning will be an achievement much more grievous, in far-reaching theologic ruin, than the decimation of the literary masterpiece of the Spirit.

And though like Origen (the arch-master of intuitive interpretation) we *feel*: what proof have we, that the hand of John, the Epistethios, is here? None; save that there was a John (if the things he seems to tell be his, and true) who was the soul-intimate of Love, and drank the secrets of His pillowing Heart; who yet was a Son of Thunder, ambitious (Mk x 37) fiercely orthodox (ix 38) one who could talk of calling down fire from heaven (L ix 54); who was a member of the triple privy-council of the Lord; who heard the Lord announce, on Olivet, all the things written down in this Book; who in the ship, with wondrous presage, played his part as Seer

and Hierophant of the "Parousia" of the Lord (Jn xxi 7); who was singularly loved by Jesus, and was allowed to think that he should live into these days of judgment (ib 22); who played, in the founding of the Church, the part of Peter's right hand; who had reason for "rejoicing" at the downfall of a City drunk with the blood of the "Apostles" of Jesus, for that he himself had lost an Apostle-brother, slain in that City by "the kings of the Land" (Rev xviii 20; A xii 2); and who on other tablets (if it were he) wrote himself down "The Presbyter" (2 Jn 1, 3 Jn 1).

Nothing more. Yes—and this: that when we read another Writing immemorially credited to that John, we find the same unique, exalted, tender thoughts, as in this Book: "The Word", "The Lamb", "The Bride", "My Father"; the same spiritual passwords—"bearing witness", "conquering", "knowing", "signifying", "keeping"; "doing truth", "doing a lie", "doing a sign", "hunger", "thirst", "Life". And, in style, the same level parallelisms, the same positive-negative antitheses; the same postponements, with repeated article, of the adjective to the noun; the same explanatory parentheses; and more than I can name of these small touches, to prejudice so trivial, to living loving sympathy so eloquent.

These things being so; and seeing that this Apocalypse is signed by "John", and hot from the hand of an eagle-expert in the words and things of Jesus: need we look for trouble? How many "Johns", so rarely and so manifoldly qualified, shall we expect to find occurrent in two generations

—or in three? Might not that be thought a restless criticism, which (raising its fussy head after the death of Origen) should be at pains to seek, for author of either or both great Books, in Asia, another "John"; a ghost; of whom we know neither that he was trained by Jesus, or heard His word, or was anybody or anything at all? Are we not put in mind of the schoolboy, who when told to name the author of the Iliad, declared that it was "not written by Homer, but by another man of the same name"? Verily we are tempted to think men would have but little stomach for the Bible, did it afford nothing for antiquarian pessimists to bite on.

That John Apostle, son of Zebedee, was John Seer and John Evangelist, is the assumption upon which my "Corollary" is written; and its purport is to find in John, and in John's Patmian Letter, the spiritual key to the hidden life of Peter. As in the postulate, so in the proposition, the evidence is less that of demonstration, than of touch; and it may be that the generous reader shall not entirely regret his advance-loan of faith. The investor in a speculative gold-mine, if it discover a vein of platinum, will review his outlay with a calmer mind.

PART I

ARGUMENT—THE OFFICIAL HISTORY OF PETER

SECTION A

The Emergence of Peter

CHAPTER I

The Designation

"The first, Simon, who is called Peter" Mtt x 2

"What was become of Peter?"

It was what Herod's soldiers wanted to know, when their illustrious prisoner disappeared. It is what most intelligent readers of the Acts want to know, when after reading the first twelve chapters—which are practically all Peter—he finds that Peter has suddenly vanished from the historic page almost as completely as a train that has entered a tunnel. It is what I want to know, when I am told that Peter—who, after this summary extinction from the forefront of the official archives of the Church, is understood to have lived and worked some twenty years—was, by personal Divine appointment and from first to last, the Vicegerent of Christ, and the Church's Supreme Head and King. And still more that, from the long and silent darkness of this eclipse, these prerogatives have emerged as the entail of a dynasty; and survive to-day—with the recent incidental rider of doctrinal and moral infallibility—in the person of an ecclesiastic in

Italy; in speaking of whom, both as the reputed trustee of a Divine "munus immenso pondere", and as the saintly president of many millions of Christ's people, I yield in respect to none.

This crux will be raised in due course as my enquiry proceeds; and there will have to be a crucifixion on it. Whether it is to be St Luke as historian, or my informant, or myself, must remain to be seen. Meanwhile, be it understood that I am approaching the Petrine Claim *a priori*. I am not concerned with the precise date of its earliest appearance in history, or with the phases of its evolution. I wish to get behind these. My business is to place it in the light of the official minutes of the planting of the Christian Church. With our Lord's dispositions, and with the Apostolic conception and discharge of them, it stands or falls. If here it find its embryo it might sleep for ages and in its day see light and vindication. Evolution, the law of all things, is the law of Truth. If not, or if it be out of line with what is self-evident in the only authoritative charter of our religion: then, though it have been preached by an angel from heaven, it is "a different gospel"; *cadit quaestio;* it dies stillborn. There is no case to go to the jury.

First, then, let us seek for light upon the question, whether, in the records of the Church's divine conception and birth, St Peter was endowed or credited with any Primacy at all. We have not far to look. And indeed, ere we have turned over many pages, we begin to wonder whether our good friends have not won the first heat. For we find that to deny the Primacy, or "First-ness", of St Peter—in

Divine designation, Apostolic conception, and personal function *for so long as we hear of him* – is out of the question. Be it understood that I use the word Primacy in its simple derivative primary sense of *primatus*—"a condition of being first"; not in any secondary sense of "supremacy", which means more than being first, seeing it refers, not to order, but to kind; still less in any later-grown ecclesiastical sense.

Primacy, then, we shall find, was Divinely given, and humanly credited, to St Peter. Whether this conclusion involve an admission of the Papal Claims is another matter. We have not yet specified the nature or functions of the Primacy. But, as regards the fact of it, let us be honest. Perhaps we may find that we can afford it. In any case, at his peril shall the seeker after truth be anything else.

To the evidence, then. It is so overwhelming that I am surprised to find Roman Catholic propagandists overlooking quite the bulk of it. Where it is at all cryptic, it does not seem to find a place in their literature. Perhaps the eye-strain, involved in seeing what is not there, induces a certain astigmatism towards what is. At all events, we have the honour freely to make them the present.

We shall call three witnesses: the acts of our Lord; of other persons; and of St Peter himself.

First Witness: The Acts of our Lord. In some cases He distinguishes St Peter by plain words; in others, by implication and allegory. (My authority for the application of the latter word to the symbolic

representation of truth is St Paul's use of it in Gal iv 24.) We will say that in the former mode He acts Explicitly; in the latter, Implicitly.

(i) *Explicitly.* Reserving the great Commission, we find Him, when He called St Peter, saying to him "Thou shalt be a Taker-alive of men" (L v 10) True, in Mt iv 19 the words are said to Andrew *and* Peter, and we are pointedly told that James and John were "partners with Simon"; the First-ness is of order, not of kind, or He would not have later rebuked them for disputing "which was supposed to be the greatest" (L xxii 24). Yet the very safeguarding of equality, at the outset of Redemption, proves Peter First.

Next, we leap to the end, and find our Lord, prescient of Peter's fall, saying to him, "Simon, Simon, Satan asked for and got you (all), so as to sift you like the wheat! But *I* made supplication on *thy* account, that *thy* faith may not fail; and do *thou*—when once thou hast turned again—consolidate thy brethren" (L xxii 31, 32). Here we have Peter (1) singled out among the rest by a special prayer of Christ, for (2) a special work among, or towards, his brethren.

And the nature of this work of "consolidation" is expanded and categorised, after St Peter has so "turned again", in a threefold order of injunction: "Pasture My lambs; Shepherd My sheep; Pasture My little sheep" (Jn xxi 15–17). The precise meaning of the two commissions, which shed the highest of all light upon St Peter's position, will be considered in due course. Suffice it here to point out that the word στήριξον means establish, ground,

fix, set fast ; its primary idea being the planting of a stake in the ground.

Once more : to Peter were addressed the first (Mtt iv 19) and the last (Jn xxi 22) words of His association with them. And they were the same words : " Follow Me ". A deeper meaning, here, than mere discipleship. For, in the second case, Peter had been " following " Him in that way from the first—and He Himself was to walk the earth no more. The words imply " Succeed Me "—in primacy and in martyrdom. For they follow the commission of " pasturing ", and the prediction of Peter's death. And they are immediately explained. For it strikes Peter that the words must apply equally to John, who also is " following " ; and, wondering that he himself should be preferred to one so loved and holy, he asks, " Lord—and what about *this* man ? " But Jesus answers, " If I mean him to wait till I am coming, what is it to thee ? do thou *follow Me !* " Not even John's " following " was to be like his. John was to be neither first nor martyr, but was quietly to live on into the new age of the Parousia. Thus St Peter is distinguished, not only as the only Apostle whose future the Lord predicts (for the words concerning John are incidental and non-committal) but as destined, in some special sense, to succeed Him in ministry and martyrdom.

Next, our Lord singled Peter for special distinction,

(ii) *Implicitly.* And this

(a) *By Priority of Threefold Call.* Peter was the first called to Probationership (Jn i 42 ; Andrew had only stayed with Him, ib 39) ; to full Disciple-

ship (L v 3, 10) ; and to Apostleship (Mtt x 2, "The first, Simon, who is called Peter" ; L vi 14, "Simon, whom He also named Peter"). At the first and last of these stages he is given the name "Rock".

(b) *By Marked Regard.* Christ made Himself Peter's guest, in home and ship ; wrought for Peter's relative one of His first public miracles, the only one, so far as we know, wrought for an Apostle (Mk i 30) ; made him Premier of His inner cabinet of three, to whom alone He gave new names, and whom He took with Him on three intimate occasions ; sent him, with John (probably), to fetch the royal ass, and to prepare the Passover ; accepted all his interruptions and self-assertions, as representative of the rest, and was ever conscious of him, covertly alluding to him, and keeping a careful eye upon him ; washed his feet first before the rest, as a matter of course (Jn xiii 6, Gk) and centred the whole lesson of the act in his person ; asked him, in the Garden, as representative, "Simon, sleepest thou ?" Risen, He "appeared to Simon" (L xxiv 34), "appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve" (1 Cor xv 5) after sending the special message, "Go, tell My Disciples, and Peter" (Mk xvi 7) ; all this implying that he was to be the primary witness of His Resurrection.

(c) *By Allegoric Act.* Much of the deepest truth of Scripture is to be discerned only in the "invisible rays," which lie beyond the spectrum of the letter. To read in this light we require the mystical sense which is a spiritualised critical faculty. It is the extraordinary absence of this kind of exegetical tact which has rendered possible that complete and

masterly misconception of the Petrine idea and function, upon which the claims of the Roman See are based. For the immensely greater part of our information about St Peter lies in this half-hidden plane; and the errors, which the plain text leaves merely unaccountable, to this "actinic" vision become egregious.

Glance first at the seemingly pointless Miracle of the Coin in the Fish's Mouth. All the Lord's Miracles were "Signs" (always so called by St John, whose Gospel is essential mysticism). For all are acted parables of spiritual mysteries. And the Holy Spirit's way is often to clothe the greatest truths in the most fantastic garb, and bury them in some obscure corner of the sacred page where all except the seeker shall pass them over. It is so with this Sign (Mtt xvii 24–27). Volumes could be written upon it. I shall refer to it more particularly (p. 189). For the present, suffice the following. It is the only Miracle wrought through a single Apostle. And it falls into two parts.

First, the Temple-Tax (Ex xxx 15; 2 K xii 4, 5; Neh x 32) is demanded of Peter, as representative of our Lord's coterie. Peter, coming to Him, is reminded that "the Sons of the Kingdom" should really be free from impost. In this Peter is made to represent the Apostles.

Secondly, to avoid scandal, the Sign follows. "The Fish that first cometh up" represents our Lord, rising from death. (This is the key to the Two Miraculous *Draughts* of Fishes, which are the Church, rising after Him.) The Coin, taken by Peter from its "Mouth", is the Atonement of the

Risen "Word". As the Tax was the "Atonement-money" for the upkeep of the Temple; so Christ was to be the Price of the building of the new Temple of souls. But this Coin was a "Stater"—twice one man's Tax; and Peter was to pay it "for Me and thee". Thus not only is Peter made to stand for the Church, but is bound up with Christ in a Sign of Death and Resurrection.

In this Sign lies one of Peter's most significant distinctions. What an asset to a Petrine cultus! But vision is scarcely a conspicuous accompaniment of ecclesiastical assurance.

Thus is Peter ever mystically associated with the Church and its planting. We are told that Jesus "rose" (Resurrection) from the "Synagogue" (Hebrew Dispensation) and "entered into the House of Simon" (the Church; L iv 38). At the beginning of His Ministry He "entered into Simon's Boat" (L v 3) and used it afterwards. From this Boat, riding as a King upon the "sea"—always used by Him as an object-lesson of Death, which He had come to destroy—He taught the people, having asked Peter to "thrust out a little from the land" (His own Palestinian ministry). Then, "when He had ceased speaking" (ascended) He bade him "Put out into the deep (the world) and let down your nets for a draught" (the first Apostolic opening of the Kingdom).

In all this there is no hint of a dynastic monarchy for Peter. But there is the clearest promise of the initial primacy of a pioneer among his equals. I am aware that some of these cryptic forecasts have been branded as later "fakes" in the interest of Petrine

pretensions. While congratulating such critics upon their perception, I regret that they should have sacrificed it to credulity. Nothing so purely exquisite could be credited to any spoiler of truth.

A treasury of light upon Peter, which we shall have much occasion to use, is the Parable of the Thief (L xii 35–48, Mtt xxiv 43–51, Mk xiii 34–37). I shall call it "The Petrine Parable". The clue to its Petrinity is Peter's question, asking to whom the Parable is addressed, and the pointed answer, "Why then—*who* is the faithful Steward, the wise, whom the Lord will appoint over His staff, to give them in season their ration? Blessed is that servant, whom, when He comes, His lord shall find doing thus. Truly I tell you, that He will set him over all His possessions!" At sight these words might seem quite Papal in tenor. On the contrary (a) they are part of a discourse addressed to all the disciples, and reflect the pastoral functions elsewhere and everywhere conferred upon them all—but, as usual, with special reference to Peter as *first* among them; and (b) they are conditioned and bounded by the Parousia. But their special reference to Peter is clinched by the warnings in the sequel, which make more for heart-searchings than claims, and indeed are fatal to them; as we shall amply see.

In the Marcan parallel, the "Porter" is "commanded to watch"; in the Good Shepherd Parable, "To Him the Porter opens" (Jn x 3); and in the "Good Samaritan" the "host" is told, "When I come again, I will repay thee". In view of the "Keys", and of his constant connexion with

" Doors ", I suggest allusion to Peter. The delivery of the mystical interpreter is the most inarticulate in the world. At best, his light is intuitive, and his evidence laboriously circumstantial ; and, all said, only to an answering intuition can it appeal.

But more in the Lord's mind even than Peter's life, is Peter's *Death*. The objective of the whole of the last chapter of St John's Gospel is our Lord's prediction, that it was to occur before the Parousia—which He refers to the Doom of Jerusalem. All through the hidden plane the same presage runs like a dark thread : as in the Sign of the Coin ; when Peter left the " Boat " to walk to the Lord across the Death-Sea, and, sinking, was " raised " by Him—and immediately the boat was at the land ; when he was the first to " enter the Tomb ", before St John (Jn xx 6) ; and when, again, before the prediction of his death, he acted it by leaping into the " Sea " and swimming to Jesus before the rest (ib xxi 7). Again, much of the Lord's passionate insistence that His followers should " take up their cross " and " lose their lives for His sake " is aimed at St Peter ; as, e.g., in Mk viii 32–38 it follows Peter's deprecation of His Death. And, when Peter boasts that he will follow Him to death, he is told that he " will follow Him afterwards " (Jn xiii 36). Much more remains to be said upon this matter. My present point is that in this insistent prominence of his death, in which he is unique among the Twelve, we see the singular importance of his life ; and in this, that of his function.

We now come to the

Second Witness : the Testimony of Others. The

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Evangelists always give St Peter the precedence as a thing understood: "The First, Peter"; "Peter and they that were with him"; Andrew comes on the Johannine scene before him, but as "Simon Peter's brother"; in all lists, and smaller groups, he is put first. To him, as representative, the tax-collectors come; Mary Magdalene runs to him with her Easter news; James and John are "partners with Simon". There can be little doubt that, from the outset of His Ministry, Christ gave his priority to be understood.

Third Witness: Peter's Own Initiative. Peter was always at least subconscious of his own priority; had he not had reason, his forwardness must have been severely checked not once nor twice. Yet never once did the Lord rebuff it. Twelve times, I count, he spoke to Him spontaneously; was ever for comments, questions, "building tabernacles"; and even dared rebuke. He it was who headed the rest in the great confession of His Godhead. At Supper he must beckon to know who the traitor was; must thrice protest his loyal love; cuts off Malchus' ear; follows to the Trial; first starts for the Tomb, and first enters it; heads the gathering at the Lake, says "I go fishing"—the others replying "We also go with thee"—true picture of his status, who is First, and not Supreme; plunges into the water, as he had once stepped out upon it, to reach Jesus; and lands, as chief Fisherman, the "net" of the firstfruits of the Sea.

For a Petrine priority, then, evidence abounds. But of more, there is not a hint. It is as though

our Lord in His dealing, and the Evangelists in their relating, were prescient of error, and at pains to forestall it. Every distinction of Peter is safeguarded with some note of equality. If he is to catch men, so is Andrew—and James and John are "partners" with him; if he share the Master's private hours, so do these; if he is sent on some errand, John goes with him; if he is to "establish", it is his brethren; if he protests his loyalty, "so say they all"; if he sleeps, so do "they that were with him"; if he "go a-fishing", the rest say "We also go with thee". Whatever in the Lord's discourses points to him is merged in the lessoning of all, and personal only by tender understanding.

Nay, so far from giving any loophole for dominance, the Lord carries on a positive campaign of caution against it. The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant is an answer to a question from Peter. When he boasts, and suggests reward, he is told that all shall be rewarded, but that "many who are first shall be last". It is "the Ten"—among whom, as James and John are apart, there could have been no question of authority except for Peter—that He cautions against the "lording" and "authority" of the "rulers of the Gentiles", and bids, "whoever would become great and be first among you shall be your servant". The "Petrine Parable" closes with the warning against the spirit of oppression; and the lesson of the Washing of the Feet is Peter's through and through. The insistent admonishment of Peter convicts him of the tendency. Yet there is no record of it in his life; on the contrary, in 1 Pet v 3 he makes the

warning his own. Surely then our Lord must have been safeguarding, in part, Peter's name against his "friends"—contemporary and future.

Reserving, then, the question of the duties of this Priority, what light do the Gospels, antecedently, throw upon its nature? It seems clear. Not a tincture of authority or privilege was to be Peter's that was not common to all. Such a notion is not only absent, but provided against. Whatever was specifically Peter's was his, not by discrimination, but by concentration; which is just the opposite. The prerogatives of the rest were *focussed* in Peter, as diffused light in a lens. His priority is one, not of quality, but of order; not dominant over the Body, but derived through it. He is the Foreman of a jury, the spokesman of a deputation.

Shall we for a moment anticipate the question, what kind of task such a position would be likely to involve? Surely it must be *a finite act*. For, in the first place, the trust could be no more than a life-interest at most; nor necessarily as much as that. In any case, so anomalous a Premiership could not be transferable. The vesting, in one of their number, of the powers of a dozen equals, unbacked by any right of command, may be an excellent arrangement for a special commission; for a world-wide and age-long religion it would be a very Utopian provision indeed. That little band, going forth new from the hands of their Master and flaming with heaven-poured charity and zeal, could ask no understanding more suitable. A few years, and their concert would be broken; when their Syrian work was done, the "uttermost ends of the earth" would

claim them. To impose such an "organisation" for all time, would be asking the impossible of human nature. It could not outlast a generation.

The "editing" of Peter, to which Papalism has committed itself, proves this. With the fading of her Founder's pure ideal, the rise of some autocracy in the Church was inevitable; and, as every rising power needs its eponymous hero, could Peter escape the tiara? In the very face of the unrecognisable Pope-King, we read the misrepresentation of the real Peter. Once a great imperial idea has wrought its spell, people are not particular about its credentials. Fisherman, Foundation-Stone, Key-bearer—what does it matter about accuracy, about evolution of thought? An Emperor is wanted—any of them will do to sire him.

If, then, our Lord meant this indefinite First-ness to be the start of a dynasty, He must have been a poor politician. Any sort of genius would have made things much stronger and clearer. But if, on the other hand, He meant it for what it plainly appears—an informal specialisation among a group of men called to a particular work—then the work in question must have been *a finite act*. It must have been some act peculiarly demanded in the first age of the Church. It must be completed before the Twelve should be broken up by separation, old age, or death; to say nothing of the Parousia, which our Lord invariably assigns as the terminus of all Apostolic activities. Such an act need not even be co-extensive with the lifetime of Peter. Should he outlive its completion, all that is special in him will fade out; for it lies, not in his person, but in his

function. And what could such a function be, but, purely and simply, *the Inauguration of the Church?*

Waive, now, this anticipation, and return to the fact that a certain priority was given to St Peter. We have adduced a mass of testimony to this fact from the Gospels. But all that we have so far gathered is circumstantial and indefinite. We may expect, we may demand, some more definite deliverance. Failing this; were not the thousand glimmering rays drawn up into some lucid focus: we should have been left in perplexity indeed. We are prepared then, for the plain Commission, given to him by our Lord after His great confession of His Messiahship and Godhead.

CHAPTER II

The Commission

"He laid a Foundation upon the Rock" L vi 48

"And I say to thee, Thou art Peter—and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her.

And I will give to thee the Keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

And whatever thou shalt bind on the earth, shall have been bound in the heavens; and whatever thou shalt loose on the earth, shall have been loosed in the heavens". (Mtt xvi 18, 19.)

It is of no use whatever trying to get rid of these words as a "late ecclesiastical interpolation" upon the Marcan text. The passage is far too full of Hebraisms (the gates of Hades, the keys of the kingdom, binding and loosing) for that. It is, in part, an adaptation by our Lord of Isaiah xxii 22. There, King Hezekiah's bad steward Shebna is deposed, and Eliakim is appointed in his place; and upon Eliakim's shoulder is laid "the key of the House of David, and he shall open, and none shall shut, and he shall shut, and none shall open". So now to Peter are given the keys which former stewards of God's house had misused to *shut* the Kingdom (L xi 52, Mtt xxiii 13). This concinnity

with other Scriptures, and with the quotation in Rev iii 7, proves the passage genuine.

Nor will it for a moment help to pretend that our Lord, by the "Rock", meant Himself. Of course He is the ultimate Rock; but to suppose Him in plain language giving a charge to St Peter as a reward of his faith, and privately meaning to give it to Himself all the while, is to insult Him. Nor was He referring to Peter's faith, or to faith like Peter's, or to the doctrine of His own Divinity which Peter had confessed; for not only is it impossible for a concretion of living souls to be built upon an abstraction, but such loose allusiveness is better suited to modern journalese, than to the lips of the Son of God. Nothing is to be gained by disingenuous interpretations. Rome takes the words honestly as they were spoken; we put the same stakes upon the table. We can afford it.

That one of the Apostles in especial should be the "Rock" on which the Church was built, is easily understood from the fact that she was built upon all of them. For she is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets" (Eph ii 20); and when the spiritual Jerusalem, the Bride, came to dwell with men, her wall was seen to have the Apostolic names upon its twelve foundations (Rev xxi 14). Into these twelve stones the Rock, writ large, expands. Upon the joint Resurrection-witness and pioneering work of the Twelve rises the House of God. But the work is headed up in Peter. And indeed, without this plain statement to such effect, his continual prominence would much perplex us; to say nothing of his actions in Acts i–xii.

The fact of a Priority admitted, then, there can be only one way to determine its character and extent. The terms of the Commission must be analysed; and all that other Scriptures represent as common to the whole Apostolic College must be exhausted from it. This done, the residuum will be pure Peter.

But after making our *précis* we find that, *qualitatively*, we have nothing left. Peter's distinction *among* his peers is luminous; distinction *above* them he has none! All that they are given, he is given; his sole discrimination lies in being given it personally. And at the points where he might seem unique——where he draws their powers into a focus so bright that the careless eye mistakes him for a sun—we find the evidence which limits even his Petrinity itself. For at these points stands revealed the special task for which the Lord is separating him; a function circumscribed both in duration and in scope; a function not indefinite, but finite and episodic; not a hegemony, but an Act. Not only is he to be nothing more than Cephas; but not necessarily Cephas for life.

Putting away all loose thought, we see that the Commission confers four distinct Functions. We shall find that all these, in kind, are shared by the whole Apostolic College; and that what suggests itself as peculiar to Peter is so only in virtue of personal allocation. Also that even this appearance of distinction is anticlimatic. That is, if in the first phase his head seems to emerge in glory, this merges back, stage by stage, into the Twelvefold radiance. This is highly instructive. The blessing of an

Abraham or a David swells into climax. But Peter does not develop into an Infallible King. He begins as a Pioneer, and ends as—just an Apostle.

(i) "*Thou art Peter* (Petros, Rock-Man) *and upon this Rock* (Petra) *I will build My Church*". That is an INAUGURAL Function. Peter was to be a *Foundation*.

The "Building" suggests a rival Building—"Hades". This was Sheol, the state of the dead under the Old Covenant. The object of the Founding of the Church was to storm Hades, which the Parousia was to abolish in favour of a state of "Blessedness in the Lord" (Rev i 18, xiv 13, xx 14). Therefore He continues,

"*And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her*". That is, defensively. The promise confirms the Function as Inaugural. Next, the "Gates" suggest "Keys":

(ii) (iii) "*And I will give to thee the Keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens*" (the Church, in her aspects spiritual and temporal). The Keys of a building, in their widest sense, are for two purposes:—

To open (or shut) the building, for admission or exclusion; and

To open (or shut) the doors of the store-rooms inside, to feed the household and protect the stores.

So here we have, involved, the Second and Third Functions: an ADMISSIVE Function, and a DISPENSIVE Function. Peter was to be a *Porter* and a *Steward*.

(iv) "*And whatever thou shalt bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens* (suggested by the Kingdom of the "heavens"); *and whatever*

thou shalt loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens". That is an ADMINISTRATIVE Function. Peter is to be a *Magistrate*.

Let us tabulate for clearness.

(i) An INAUGURAL Function—a *Foundation*.

(ii) An ADMISSIVE Function—a *Porter*.

(iii) A DISPENSIVE Function—a *Steward*.

(iv) An ADMINISTRATIVE Function—a *Magistrate*.

Now the two last of these Functions need not detain us at all. For we know that they were the common property of the Twelve. The Dispensive (iii) was again committed to Peter in "Feed My Lambs"; but it was simply the Pastoral Office claimed for the Apostles by St Paul, "We are Stewards of the mysteries of God"; spoken of by him as the property of every Bishop in Acts xx 28 and Tit i 7, and by Peter himself of Presbyters in 1 P v 2 (cp the giving of the loaves to the disciples in Mtt xiv 19, and the powers conferred by Christ in Mk vi 13; see Mk xvi 17, 18). And the Administrative (iv), the power to "bind and loose", He extends, two chapters further on, in the same terms ("whatsoever *you* shall bind", etc., Mtt xviii 18) to them all; defining it later (Jn xx 23) as the power to "remit and retain sins"; which authority St Paul exercises in 1 Cor v 3–5 and 2 Cor ii 10, "delivering to Satan", "judging" by "spiritual presence", and "forgiving". Had but Peter used such language!

But the two first Functions yet remain. Can we not save them to Peter's depleted prerogative? Alas—save intensively, no. The first, the Inaugural (i) makes him a Foundation. But—as we have seen—both St Paul, and history, and the Apocalyptic

Vision, teach us that " the Church is built upon the Foundation of *the Apostles* ". St Paul " laid foundations " (1 Cor iii 10) and would not build upon those laid by others (Rom xv 20). Concentrate the Rock-idea in Peter as you will, you cannot consecrate it to him ; for all are " Stones ", basing the wall. The second Function, the Admissive (ii) makes him a Porter. With His Keys he is to open the Church and admit souls to her, and, at discretion, exclude. The former notion merges with (i) ; the latter, with the " binding " in (iv). But both duties are common. All were Fishers of Men, all were commissioned to " preach and to baptise " (Mtt iv 19, Mk xvi 15, 16) ; all were empowered to excommunicate and to " retain sin " Mtt xviii 17, 18, Jn xx 23).

In the qualitative Apostolic sense, then—and it would seem the Holy Spirit has in every case purposely made the point clear—all these Functions are common ; representatively, they are vested in Peter. He is a nucleus or centre of force ; a ganglion upon a nerve. He is just " First ". This is what I meant by Primacy ; and nothing more. And it is just what we gathered from our collation of Peter in the Gospels.

And, as then we surmised the practical objective of this First-ness, so now is our surmise confirmed. For now we have Peter's instructions in black and white ; and we know the head and front and highest common factor of them. It is *a Finite Act of Inauguration*. Peter is a Foundation and Peter is a Key-Bearer. He is to base, and he is to open. The two are one. He is no more " Supreme " than an outgoing harbour-pilot is captain, and just as

much the founder of a dynasty as is the builder of a railway. The disciples certainly did not understand the words as anything more than a special commission, or they would not have been disputing, on Maundy Thursday night, as to which of them should be the greatest. Peter is called, not to be, but to do ; and seeing that the powers he expresses reside in the Body, he is rather its servant than its lord. Neither by election nor by function is he a "Head", any more than a house can be roofed with the ground it stands on, or a statue crowned with its pedestal. His Commission defines itself, and its terms are their own limitation.

If issue be joined, there can be but one criterion. And that will be final. *An inspired official record of the Church's beginnings* should settle the question. From such a source we should learn what interpretation was put upon St Peter's Commission by himself and by the rest ; and how it was carried out. In this light, and in this light alone, can the terms of the Commission be explained. Such a testimony would be peculiarly safeguarded. For a body of men so tenacious about priority would not be likely to lie down under any unwarranted pretensions. They would watch, and quote, and sift, and protest. There could be no fiercer crucible for "claims", than Pentecost and its sequels ; and no better test. Every word of the recent Lord was known by heart ; and the "divine voice" of a "Vicar of Christ" would quickly have to justify itself.

Such a record exists, in the Acts of the Apostles. It is a continuous and lucid history of the Church of God, in her most important aspects, during the first

twenty years, or thereabouts, of her life; it is acknowledged to have been written under Divine guidance, and may therefore be accepted as of final authority in a question so vital as that of a Vicegerent of God on earth; and seeing that it mentions Peter's name—for so long as it continues to mention him at all—some sixty times, it should scarcely leave us in any doubt as to the estimate of his standing either in his own mind or in those of his peers. Never was there offered, for the solution of any question, so promising a field. Any sort of "Petrine Claims" ought to find in it either their Moriah or their Aceldama. Otherwise Christ must be said to have left His affairs in very considerable confusion.

CHAPTER III

The Function

"In those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren"
Acts i 15

We open the Acts, then. And we find that nothing in the world could be more methodical or more clear, than St Peter's recorded discharge of the Inaugurative work enjoined upon him by our Lord. Not by any possibility could he have more accurately carried out the terms of his Commission—or more strictly confined himself to them. We are left in no sort of doubt as to what his Lord meant him, and did not mean him, to be and to do, when we study what he was and what he did. The only and the best possible commentary upon his strangely-disputed Charter, is his own discharge of it.

But before we can understand his work or the light it throws upon his Master's plan, we must know something of the order in which the Spirit of God regarded that field of the world, into which by Peter's special husbandry He designed to plant His Church. Build up your thoughts round the Parable of the Great Supper in L xiv 16–24. Three classes of people, in descending order of spiritual quality, are invited to the Banquet; in each case a "Servant" is sent to bring them in, in whom we

may well find St Peter. Before the Church, then, could be "Catholic", i.e., open to the whole world, there were three groups of people to be admitted to its pale:

(i) the guests who had long ago been bidden, *Israel*;

(ii) the "poor in the streets and lanes of the city"—those hybrid suburbans both spiritual and local—*the Samaritans*: and

(iii) the common sort in the "highways and hedges", the men of the open country—the *Gentiles*.

This concentric method of outward progress is a consistent feature of the plan of Redemption. It was the spiritual order of the world. It was the official order of our Lord's own mission, at whose opening "He left *Judaea*", and went "*through Samaria*" to "*Galilee*" (which stood for Gentile darkness, Is ix 1, Mtt iv 15, 16), where He healed the Gentile nobleman's son (Jn iv 3, 4, 46). Forbidden to the Twelve in their first mission, it is implied as reserved for their last: they were not to go to the Gentiles, nor to the Samaritans, but to Israel (Mtt x 5, 6). It was the order imposed upon them in His last words, "Unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem"; "Ye shall be My witnesses, both (i) in Judaea, (ii) in Samaria, and (iii) to the uttermost part of the earth" (L xxiv 47, A i 8). It was by the reverse of this way (written upon the map by the course of the Jordan as it flows into the Sea of Judgment) that both her salvation (L xix 28) and her Doom (as recorded by Josephus) came upon Jerusalem.

Now this was the itinerary which Jesus expressly

laid upon St Peter himself; "Pasture My lambs" (Israel); "Shepherd My sheep" (the fringe of Samaritans, proselytes, and Gentilised Hebrews); and "Pasture My little sheep" (Gentiles).

Here then was Peter's natural schedule as Pioneer of the Church in the world. Let us see how Peter, as the organ of the whole body, becomes the Rock upon which the three groups are in turn built in; how Peter, opening the three doors, wields the universal Keys. Let us follow this first and Petrine phase of the Church. It is the foundation-stone, fair and square, from which the whole building springs; exquisite is its adaptation to the masonry that rises from it; but the line of suture is definite and clear.

And its peculiar chronicle is that former of the two sections of the Book of the Acts, which comprises the first twelve chapters, and whose cleavage from the remainder is deliberate and distinct. For the title, "The Acts of the Apostles", denotes in summary the acts of SS Peter and Paul; and the former section, which may be called the first volume of Church History, contains the Acts of Peter—and records how he "established his brethren". Not till its close is the Church fully *founded*, reaching that Catholic ideal of its structure of which St Paul's and all subsequent work is but an amplification. Not till the Rock is covered with masonry; not till the house is based and opened to all mankind: can the plan of God be said to be on foot, the work of Christ in being.

Of this Founding and Opening, threefold in process, the instruments are the Twelve in and through Peter.

In this initial work his representative function is lodged ; to it, and to its duration, all that specialises him is confined ; when it is complete he is, in all but Apostolate, *functus officio*. We scarcely hear of him again. Why should we ? It is the nature of a Foundation to lie buried under the building. The last are first, and the first last. " Last of all, born out of due time ", Paul, a " wise masterbuilder ", leaps to the scaffolding. The Acts become his " Acts " to the end. Fiery indeed would have been his reception of a " Vicar of Christ ".

Now to the Book. It opens with the parting instructions of the Lord as to the itinerary of the " Witness " (i 8). After His departure, Peter's first act is to " consolidate his brethren ". In the square bed of Stones named in Peter, there is a gap. Until this be filled, Peter himself is not complete. After a roll-call of the Eleven, headed by the name of Peter, we see the Rock, " standing up in the midst of the brethren "—a typical statement of his function—and presiding at the election of Matthias in full meeting of the infant Church. " One must with us become a witness ". So to the new Apostle the Porter opens, the breach of Satan in the Rock is by the Rock repaired. The Building can begin. And the first stones are

(i) *Israel.* It is Peter who, on the Church's birthday " standing up with the Eleven ", opens the Door to the Covenant-People in their national home : " Ye men of Judah, and all that dwell at Jerusalem, hearken to my words." It is Peter who founds in Pentecostal flame, propounds the new Salvation to " all the House of Israel " ; flings wide

to the Children of the Promise the gate of Faith and Baptism, builds in upon the Rock the first three thousand Hebrew pilgrims who, returning to their scattered homes, furrow the earth for Apostolic seed. It is under Peter's Stewardship that the heavenly stores are unlocked in the first Eucharists that wean the Church; Peter it is who "looses" the firstborn from a "crooked generation", and "binds" them in the pure young Communism of charity and joy (A ii). But never for an instant are they or we allowed to suppose that Peter is anything but "First"; ever he "stands up in the midst", "stands up with the eleven"; "they said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles", "through the Apostles many wonders and signs were done". The antidote of error grows ever in the garden of truth.

It is Peter ("and John", representing the rest) who opens with his Keys the "Beautiful Gate" of twofold health to the beggar-type of a People sick in body and soul: "What I have, that I give;" but first, "Look on *Us*" (iii 1–10). It is Peter who, "binding" the beholders with the first threats of the coming Judgment, "looses" them with the first Absolution; "founding" them in the Resurrection-truth "whereof We are witnesses"; cementing two thousand further souls to the Rock (iii 11–iv 4).

It is Peter who, haled before the Sanhedrin with the rest (for in Peter "*they* taught the people") proclaims the "Stone which is made the Head of the corner"; a glorious Masonry, wherein the Foundation heralds the Topstone—not usurps Its place! It is Peter ("and John") who leads the first Christian

praise—to which again the Spirit sets His seal (iv 1–31).

It is Peter who opens the first pooling of the new Kingdom's earthly goods; who "binds" ("Tell Me") the first judgment of discipline upon its first sinning citizens, "shutting" with his Keys upon the false pair the door of death—to open to them, it may be, the gate of hope—striking the Church with fear (iv 32–v 11). It is Peter who, with his very shadow, "looses" the bondage of the sick and the demonised. It is Peter who, emerging with the rest from the "opened doors" of the prison, leads the joyous testimony to Christ, of Whose power "we are witnesses" (v 15–32). And it is Peter who, "going throughout all parts" (but still in Judaea) "looses" Æneas from his palsy, and in the first miracle of Resurrection, after the manner of his Master, Dorcas from death; and always Stones are added to the Rock (ix 32–42).

And does Peter, dressed in all this power and glory, overstep the limits of his Charter, forget that he is a lantern and mistake himself for a sun? Never. Ever is he "in the midst of the brethren", "with the Eleven"; never does he forget—"one must be a witness *with us*"; "*we all* are witnesses"; "Look on Us"; "As though *we* had made him to walk"; "if *we* are examined"; "*we* cannot but speak what we have seen and heard". Always there is perfect concert of action: "they prayed"; "they were all together"; "it sat upon each of them"; "many wonders were done by the Apostles"; "all the people ran unto them"; "they taught the people"; "What shall we do

with these men?" "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord"; "they laid them at the Apostles' feet"; "the Twelve" call the meeting for the election of deacons, and "lay their hands on them". Wherever Peter stands in brightest radiance, there is some reminder that he is but the focus of the light of all. Where Peter speaks, all speak; where Peter acts, it is the act of all.

But now, proceeding outwards from Judaea, we come to the second circle of building.

(ii) *The Samaritans.* In these suburbs of Jewry, half Jewish and half pagan, the Lord, moving in like order, had sowed the seed. Now, for His labourers, "sent to reap that whereon they had not laboured", the harvest was waiting (Jn iv 4–42). Here again, the Rock must found, the Keys must open. After the baptismal work of Philip the Deacon, who is "sent by the Apostles who were in Jerusalem" to hold, in Samaria, the great Confirmation? Peter ("and John"). And—as here, too, the shutting power of the Keys must be placed on record—who binds, and is begged to loose, Simon Magus? Who, but the Rock? And again, on this second phase of the building, the Holy Ghost is outpoured (A viii 14–24). Lastly, the outermost and universal circle.

(iii) *The Gentiles.* The open secret of the Purpose of the ages, the supreme vision of the Christ, had been the unlocking of the Mercy of Israel to the world. The Prophets had chanted it through the centuries, darkly at first, but with ever-brightening hope; the promise had dawned in the visit of the Magi and the Song of Symeon. The first coming of

the Greeks to Jesus, presage of the universal harvest for which He was to die, had filled Him with a tense emotion (Jn xii 20–32); it was the firstfruits of His coming "glory". And now, the time was come. But not for Peter the work. God strains no man's powers, for He made and knows man; and from no unlettered, home-bred Hebrew, hedged with the destiny of prejudice, would he exact the skilled labour of a cosmopolitan genius. God is the measure of His own resources; and for this stupendous work, already, Saul of Tarsus has been secretly broken and forged into a tool.

But will Christ, then, supersede His appointed Pioneer, give His word the lie? Never. One might have thought that the future "Apostle of the Circumcision" was of all men least fitted to cast the first morsel of the children's bread to "dogs". Yet he is the subjacent Rock. All things must be begun in and by him. And this is the most important stone of all; the final objective; the very body of the building. Before the new Apostle put a finger to the work, it must be revealed to, and installed by, Peter.

So Peter becomes, by courtesy of inceptive act, the first "Apostle of the Gentiles". He lays, of "Catholicism," the first sod. And so great is the occasion, that an angel comes to sponsor it. In the person of a Roman officer, the world is to enter Christ. And this third and last and most fearsome "Door" is to open to the Key-bearer "of its own accord". The Angel bids Cornelius send to Joppa and fetch "one Simon, who is surnamed Peter".

Now for a development so startling, Peter himself

must be lessoned and prepared. Neither in brain nor heart is he ready for a sheer upheaval of the spiritual principles of a lifetime. On his housetop "by the sea-side" (for the Gentile world, to whose brink his steps are called, is in Hebrew figure ever "the sea") comes to him the threefold dream to teach him that no creature of God is "common", when once it is cleansed with Blood. Meanwhile, "before the gate" of this great Opener of Gates stand the three envoys, who conduct him to their chief.

And so the Rock proclaims to Cornelius the Corner-Stone; of Whose risen Life, he declares once more, "*We* are witnesses; and He charged us to testify that He shall judge". Follows, sealing this third official Opening, a third outpouring of the Holy Ghost; another charisma of tongues; and another corporate Baptism. The Foundations are covered; the base is set. Henceforth the Church's growth is heavenward (A x).

It remains for the Rock to report officially this unheard-of thing to his outraged colleagues at Jerusalem. Seeing he derives from them, he is responsible to them. Fully he relates to them the story: how God has given to the Gentiles "the like gift as He did also to Us"; asserting for the last time his own acknowledged Charter—in all inceptive action foremost among his peers. And they cannot gainsay their Foreman, or the thing to which he has committed them. In and through him, even without their will—while Founding is in question—their authority is gone forth, their act is fact. They held their peace, and glorified God,

saying, " Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto Life " (xxi 1–18). And immediately (xi 19, 20) we are told that the Word, which has hitherto been preached " to none save only to Jews ", begins to be spoken to Gentiles ; and Saul, the waiting instrument of the world-work installed by Peter, is sought out and brought to Antioch ; where is born, now that the Bond-woman is cast out, the great new name of " Christian " (26).

Nor even yet does St Paul commence his Gentile work, which later evolves naturally from Jewish rejection (xiii 44–48) ; and for his formal authorisation he goes up to Jerusalem " to see Cephas "—and no other, except James (doubtless as local Bishop : Gal i 18, 19). By the Rock his " great door " is opened ; to the Rock, as such and while such, his duties are owed.

Thus " upon the Rock " Christ has at last " built His Church ". Through three phases she has reached Integrity, for she is now complete in herself ; and Unity, for she is One. Three tiers of masonry rest on Peter, and lo, the three are one. Three Doors in line his Keys have opened—and, as doors, annulled, for " they shall never be shut day nor night ". In three Pentecosts, Peter has thrice called down that Spirit Who is to cement the whole building in its " growth up to the Top-stone " (A ii 1, viii 17, x 44 ; 1 P ii 4–7 ; Eph ii 20–22).

And the power and work of Peter, writ large, has been the power and work of Twelve. Not their overlord was he, but their common Trustee and Delegate ; at any stage of his action they could have arraigned

him for his disposal of their trust, as in this last case they did.

But now the Commission is accomplished, the Trust discharged. It was, to make the Church; and the Church is a fact in being. All is changed. Peter is merged in the Apostolate; the fountain falls back into its source. Henceforth, save by honour of past glories, he is no more than Andrew or Thomas or John; and, in all scope of patent ascendancy, far less than Paul.

To elect a new Peter by vote in every generation, therefore, is an error which explodes into five fallacies at sight. It misreads

(a) the election of Peter: which was not to predominate, but to represent.

(b) the function of Peter; which was not to govern, but to make.

(c) the tenure of Peter: which was consequently co-extensive, not with his life, but with his function.

(d) the relation of Peter to posterity; which is, again consequently, neither supreme, nor permanent, nor continuous, nor existent at all save in saintly communion and honour, and joint bequest of Apostolic succession. And

(e) the nature of succession itself: which, in the only form revealed to us by Christ, is transmission from the living to the living, by laying-on of hands; and is therefore in no sense constituted by balloting after death; the only recorded case of which arose from the exigency of a traitor's suicide.

CHAPTER IV

The Discharge

"The Angel departed from him . . . and, going out, he went to a Different Place" Acts xii 10, 17

And so we are now prepared for a modification of Peter's prominence in the official record of the Church. But we scarcely expect the almost entire deletion of his name, which meets us. We might have imagined that he would gradually fade out of the light; that he would figure less in great initiatives, be less deferred to. But, after the great farewell chapter of the Acts (the twelfth chapter, of which we are about to speak) he is never but once mentioned again; and that one mention shows him almost startlingly displaced from eminence. Such a change from glory to darkness should be preceded by some modulation. When a great man retires or dies, his chronicler scarcely leaves him without some dwelling on his exodus, some retrospect of praise.

With this hero and this record, then, it is conspicuously so. To those who know the language of inspiration, the twelfth chapter of the Acts is like the farewell of Antigone. We shall later look into its mysteries, and find in it much more than farewell. Meanwhile, suffice it that this chapter, one of the

most deeply-significant in all the Scriptures, constitutes a very solemn and dramatic abdication on the part of Peter; and marks thereby a definite bisection in the Book of the Acts.

This chapter, this great Deed of Discharge, differs greatly in many ways from the rest of the Book. In tone it is both sad and ominous. Its note throughout, impossible to mistake, is that of a solemn departure; the formal deposition of a charge accomplished, followed by an exodus into a mysterious night of trial and of danger. No critic worth the name can thread its mazes of long-drawn detail, so immaterial to the history, and be satisfied with the letter. The treasure lies within; and the cryptogram is for Peter's sake: a veil for the delicate personalities of a mantle fallen; and much more—a mystery of much warning and promise for Peter's self, of preparation and reminder and serious foreshadowing of death, into which we cannot enter yet. For we are yet but walking on the surface of Peter's record, and would not perplex with riddles our review of that plain and honest scheme, wherein who runs may read unerringly if his eye be single. But even so we must dip a little way beneath the lines.

The Chapter records how Peter was thrown into prison by Herod, and liberated by an Angel. This Angel stands for the divine *numen* or inspiring and guiding principle, which has been with Peter throughout the ten years of his now-discharged Commission. The scene is laid in the dead of night—the extinction of the light of Peter's zenith, the obscurity of his retiring, and the hiddenness into which he goes.

In detail full of reminiscence of his dread night of Denial and dark with omen for Peter, he is made to rehearse, in dumb symbolic miniature, the whole of his past activity as Founder of the Church. The Angel leads him out of " prison " (the blind waywardness of Gospel days) through three " Doors " ; they are the " Gates of Hades " which have " not prevailed " against his Keys—the three openings of the Church in outward order, of which we have spoken. The last and dreadest of them, " the iron gate which leadeth unto the city "—the heathen stronghold of Satan himself—" opens of its own accord " ; it is the voluntary summons of the first Gentile, Cornelius. All this while Peter is like one walking in his sleep ; he " knew not that it was true, but thought he saw a vision " ; for it is a vision of the parting of his life.

Then, on emerging into freedom—the freedom of discharge—the most significant thing of all occurs : " *Straightway the Angel departed from him* ". The *numen* of Peter's election is withdrawn ! He has yet but " one street " to pass through—the simple Apostolic levels of the long stretch of life yet remaining to him. And so, " when he was come to himself ", when he realised that he was now just " Simon Peter, an Apostle ", he awakes to the heavenly auspice of both charge and discharge, lease and release : " Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His Angel, and hath delivered me . . . ! "

The solemn Exodus remains. Pondering deeply all he has learned, he makes his way through the night to the friendly house of Mark's mother, where

strangely he is taken for " his Angel " (the significance is obvious). There, to the gathering assembled in prayer for him, he relates his story. Then, he makes arrangements for its notification to " James, and to the brethren " (the first distinctive mention of the name of the Bishop of Jerusalem, whom afterwards we seem to find taking precedence of Peter at the Congress—the message sounds almost like the designation of a successor) and finally makes his formal act of resignation : *"He went out—and departed to another place"*. After this he is but once heard of again ; and then, as anything but Primate !

What an extinction ! As complete as its announcement is solemn. He is erased from the history. Up to this chapter inclusive, all has been Peter ; we could scarcely imagine the Church without him ; he has been named some sixty times. Now, with but a mute show of signs to say farewell, he has vanished into the night. In the morning the soldiers (xii 18) hunted right and left : " What was become of Peter ? " And echo comes down the ages, " What was become of Peter ? "

We can only answer, with St Luke, that he had " gone out " ; out of his provisional service, as a midwife goes out ; and " departed to another place "—εἰν ἕτερον τόπον—to a *different*[1] place : the place of an unit in the *posse* he had led. " The first shall be last ". By its nature and automatically his trust has lapsed. He has returned his Keys to Him " that hath the Key of David ", the " keys of

[1] Not merely to " another " place. As Lightfoot says, " ἕτερος implies a difference of kind, which is not involved in ἄλλος. Ἄλλος adds, while ἕτερος distinguishes " (*Galatians*, p. 76).

Hades and of death". The specialised organ was evolved for a special purpose. Now, it suffers re-involution into the Body.

How sombrely, how almost pathetically he "goes out"! Installed amid the wondering crowds at Pentecost, hierophant of heaven's wind and flame; discharged, a fettered prisoner of the night; Peter goes forth alone, amid all the omens of weakness and death. Most like to death itself is that Exodus-chapter of the Acts. Of this, again, in its place.

Yet how could it be otherwise? The House stood, based and square; dwarfed as yet, a sketch, a shell, but archetypally complete. Nothing was to add, or will be added; only expansion remained; for the Design had materialised. Nothing that the greatest spiritual genius, a Paul, an Athanasius, an Augustine, an Aquinas, a Francis, should henceforth effect for the Church of God, could be Petrine, or anything but evolutionary; "other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid".

Yet many were destined to "build upon this foundation". Saul of Tarsus heads the list. And, as we shall see (ch xxii) he is, by express demonstration of the Spirit, the great Complement of Peter, who carries Peter's Function to a consummation which is itself the *reductio ad absurdum* of a perpetuation of Peter. For immediately Peter has disappeared, "Paul", having seen a vision in the Temple, by which he is solemnly commissioned as the Apostle of the Gentiles (A xxii 17–21), leaves Jerusalem; and, arriving at Antioch (where, as in a new Jerusalem, the Catholic name of "Christian" has by now crowned the new emancipation of the

Church) is named (xiii 9) ordained, and sent forth by the Spirit (xiii 2–4).

And pointedly the great Chapter ends with a note which introduces him as Peter's double, evolved phœnix-like from Peter. For Paul at once starts on his first great journey, from Jerusalem—whence Peter had disappeared—taking with him as acolyte the son of that very house whence Peter had "gone out", John Mark[1]; and it is on this journey that Paul first formally "turns to the Gentiles" (xii 25, xiii 2–5, 46). If the true "Successor of St Peter", then, be St Paul—"of whose tribe St Luke spake nothing concerning Popes"—what are we to think?

And finally, observe the time in Apostolic history, at which this great transition happened. It was in the year of Herod Agrippa's death; noted for us by A xii 23; the great landmark of primitive Church history; the year A.D. 44—the one year of which we can be absolutely certain. That secular chronology should come in to confirm the moment at which the Church's Rock—the last stone of her foundations having been based upon him—passed from sight; the moment from which that Building-up of the Christian Temple began, which is destined to "grow up in all things into" the Corner Stone: is at least significant. The focus of Peter's parabola is reached with the "Consolidation of his Brethren" (L xxii 32).

Need there, could there be a line of Peters? His name should teach us.

[1] Peter's spiritual "son," friend, and chronicler; as though a property of Peter had passed over to Paul.

SECTION B

The Re-mergence of Peter

CHAPTER V

Abdication in Being

" James replied, saying . . . Wherefore my judgment is "
Acts xv 13, 19

But seemingly in the judgment of the Spirit neither his charge nor its discharge, nor the transparent mystery-play of his exit, sufficed as provisions of safety for Peter against his friends. Peter must emerge a moment from the quiet labours of his Apostolic aftermath to allay our obstinate suspicions of a something of " God's Vicar " left about him—if ever it was there. As when he said to Cornelius, his first " worshipper ", " Stand up ; I myself also am a man " ; so once again in the history he comes before us, as though re-opening an instant his closed Charter, to show us that he has read it rightly. " He who is chief among you shall become as he that doth serve ".

For the curtain, in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, rises upon a scene, in which Peter neither receives nor claims either any kind of priority or even the courtesy reminiscent of it, but cedes it to another—and that other neither Andrew nor John ;

and actually refers to his own past function as ancient history; and that at a pan-Apostolic Council of the Church, summoned to arrange a matter vital to her interests at large; and in his own Jerusalem, where on the Church's birthday he had sponsored her baptism of fire! It is all quite naturally told, and bears the palpable signature of the Holy Ghost. For who else could foresee an error practically inconceivable, and preclude it without suggesting it?

From St Peter's disappearance (say A.D. 43) we leap three chapters, which are wholly taken up with the first doings of the new hero, Paul. After two or three years (the vexed question of dates is immaterial, the point is the order of events; say the late "forties") an Apostolic Congress is held at Jerusalem, the metropolis of the Church. It has been called to decide a great question which has arisen about the Gentile Christians, whom St Paul has been pouring into the Church. Sooner or later the question was bound to come up: how far are these to be tied to the Law of Moses? What is to be the relation of the graft to the parent stem?

This was a vital question, for it was corollary to the last great act of Peter, which had made the Church, at least formally, Catholic. The last obstacle to Christian unity was the Law. Christ was its logical *reductio ad absurdum;* still it lingered, a name and a burden; this question sounded its doom.

At the final tribunal held upon this question then, which was destined to abrogate the Law, it was only to be expected that we should see Peter.

The whole theme of Gentile admission must be revived; and it was Peter who had opened the door. His Keys had passed[1] with the using, for the Door was open; but his honour was inveterate and his deposition both necessary and indefeasible. Upon his person, as Rock, the family of Cornelius—the potential world—had been built; who better qualified than he to witness, that the cement was Charity? So the matter is brought before the College of Apostles at Jerusalem.

It is here, then, in full Council of his peers, that Peter comes before us for the last time. But—*quantum mutatus ab illo!* Is it Peter, or his ghost? Where is now his Primacy? Neither does he summon, nor preside, nor open, nor pronounce. Apparently the Chair is filled by James the Lord's Brother. Local Bishop? Possibly; but this Council was of "the whole Church", or its representatives (xv 22); and the question was the most pregnant since Pentecost; its decision would shape the whole future of Christianity. Where, then, is Peter, who was wont to "stand up before the Eleven"? Nay, had the matter arisen in the former "Petrine" days, would there have been a Council at all? There had been none to decide that Cornelius-matter, and *that* was revolution, a new heaven and earth; why then a Council, for a mere matter of detail arising out of it?

For, when that startling revelation of Gentile inclusion had first come, Peter alone had been made its private and personal custodian and agent, and the Church had learned it from his lips. She had

[1] In their inaugural sense.

never been consulted at all. Here, then, was a new crisis, arising from it. Shall the *esse* of the Church be Peter's personal province, and her *bene esse* her own? What is come to pass? And, if St James were "local Bishop", how came he so? There was nothing "local", surely, about Jerusalem. Its Bishop (if such an office had yet evolved; let us say its chief presbyter, if you will) must at this early date have been regarded as the highest official in the Church. If any field were Peter's, surely it was Jerusalem, the centre of the Theocracy, the scene of his mighty Pentecostal creation; where he had so gloriously led the election of a new Apostle, thundered Jesus to an assembled nation gathered from the whole world, headed the joyous witness before the terrible hierarchy, and presided over the new-born Commune of the Church?

Why a "Bishop of Jerusalem", other than Peter? and, even so, would he not, to Peter if still Primate, vacate the Chair? Had the scene been Phœnicia or Cyprus, Cyrene or Antioch, there might have been a majestic grace in the Primate's act of deference to the local authority; but in Jerusalem? and at an œcumenical Council? The place and the occasion are alike more eloquent of Peter's altered status than would have been a deed of resignation signed and sealed. Could a question of such magnitude arise in these days, would Peter's "Successor" content himself by taking his turn with an unassuming speech at a Vatican Council—and leave a "local Bishop" to preside and pronounce? Would he not, *urbi et orbi*, issue a Bull?

As to the apparent presidency of James, it matters

little to our point who presided, if it were not Peter. Personally I see much reason to think that the James killed by Herod just before Peter's "Discharge" had been looked upon as coming next to Peter, and that the other James, partly owing to his great character and partly to his relationship with the Lord, had stepped into his place. The fact of Herod singling out the former James for death argues him an Apostle of prominence; and Peter's farewell words, "Go, show these things to James", suggest, as I have said, that he is referring them to a person responsible in his stead. On St Paul's official visit to Peter at Jerusalem, he saw no other Apostle, "save James the Lord's brother"; and he puts James before Cephas, and speaks of him as in authority at Jerusalem (Gal i 19, ii 9, 12). In any case, the presidency of James at this Council leaves little room for doubt.

But now to the proceedings. Peter waits his opening to speak. Not till there has been prolonged debate does he "rise". He reminds the Council (it seems almost a little pathetic) of his own discharged and abdicated "first-ship". It was only a few years before that he was sealing the first Gentile Christian in his own person; but it has now become ancient history. He bases upon it no claim to authority in decision; he only recalls it as a sort of introduction to his own part in a debate about Gentiles; and at once passes on to offer a few somewhat deprecatory remarks upon the question:

"Brethren! You know how, *back in old days* (Gk, from ancient days) God made a selection among

you, that by my lips the Gentiles should hear" —and then follows his own very modest expression of opinion: "Now therefore why should you tempt God, that you should put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? Nay, we believe", and so forth. Peter's whole tone is changed from the days when he "stood up in the midst" of the first Council—"One must become a witness!"

And now contrast the "reply", or "summing-up", of James. Not his the new modesty of the Rock. After Barnabas and Paul have had their say, "James answered". This does not mean that he answered Barnabas and Paul; for he only spoke after they "had held their peace". What he "answers" is the question before the meeting. He gives the casting vote. Closing the debate with a few authoritative words, he implies, in his very endorsement of Peter's former initiative, its obsolescence:

"Brethren, listen to *me!* Symeon has expounded how *first* God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name". He does not dwell on this personal claim of Peter's. He plunges at once into the subject. After a reference of this first Petrine "building" to the words of Amos, he proceeds to pass sentence with an authority more emphatic and more absolute, as it seems to me, than any ever assumed by Peter at his Rockiest, or by anyone in those days save perhaps St Paul:

"*Wherefore I decide* (διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω: there was no κρίνω in St Peter's speech) that we trouble not them who from among the Gentiles turn to God;

but that we write to them, that they abstain from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood ".

Upon this " sentence " immediate action is taken. And this is the last of Peter, so far as the history is concerned. Note that here, in this last mention, he whose name of Peter so sublimely thunders through the first scenes, is called by the old name, the Jewish name, the name of the natural man— " Symeon ".

The " Shadow of Peter has passed by " ! The Book has long since become simply the Acts of Paul. Peter cannot have successors *qua* Peter, simply because he is, save in honourable reminiscence, Peter no more. He is " Symeon " ; as, before he was made a disciple of the Lord, he was " Simon " (Jn i 42).

CHAPTER VI

Spiritual Reaction (Historic)

"I resisted Cephas to the face, because he stood condemned"
Gal ii 11

But it is a law of thought that when one truth is set upon a candlestick, others flock to it for vindication—and do it homage in its own light. Having by honest study of Peter's record placed Peter in his true status, we are met at this point, not indeed with an additional proof of our enthroned conclusion, but with a very luminous illustration of it; and the gloss is itself explained by the text.

And it is in this connexion that we enter for the first time upon a phase of the Petrine theme, which is going to occupy us practically to the end. It is a melancholy phase, because it leads from the contemplation of Peter's glory, which has engaged us hitherto, into the pathology of his weakness. But when we remember that Peter's weakness, which as we shall see was co-extensive with his lifetime, is the measure of Peter's crown, we shall escape the danger of temerity in the treating of it.

And indeed the admirable and Divinely-delicate reserve, from whose protection it will be our permitted task to wrest its secrets, should secure for it a reverential tenderness deeper even than the homage we accord him as an illustrious Prince of

the Church. For our tribute to his heroic greatness gives itself; but his struggles and his falls are God's secret and his own soul's; and if God give us light to peer into His mysterious dealings with His servant, we shall remember that God has bound up His own honour with the honour of the chosen Pioneer of His greatest work on earth.

For Peter was the sponsor of God's Church; and to revere the Church is to revere Peter, if we revere him with understanding and not with astigmatism; and it was lest profane men should point to the thorns through which Peter struggled to his crown, that God, his great work accomplished, hid him in His Hand. Yet, even in that "other place", through many omens and mysterious signs it is possible for the student of the Spirit's language to follow the "Shadow of Peter". For he who reads with "single eye" shall "have no part dark". And it will ere long be our task to enter upon this hidden path; for which may God grant us both vision and holy fear.

But our immediate concern is with the sole exception to this plan of reticence; and with this only by way of confirmation of what has gone before. After his last mention in the Acts, where we see him in his altered position at the Congress, we meet with only one note of Peter, in the New Testament. It is the story of the Lapse at Antioch.

Here a sad wonder startles us. For we find St Peter, after all his noble work so brilliantly completed, not merely changed in status as we should expect, but (if only for an hour) worsened in spirit. We find him recaptured in the meshes of an old

weakness, whose toils we might have imagined long since broken. We see him offending against his own *magnum opus*. He has picked up again the Keys so honourably surrendered, and has turned them back in the wards! And we shall see how between this strange conduct (otherwise hard to account for) and the true aspect of his Commission, there is action and reaction of light.

After the Congress at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch. With them went the bearers of the Apostolic Letter which decreed the freedom of Gentile Christians from Jewish ceremonial burdens. This Letter was read to the Gentile Church in Antioch, and caused great joy. When the envoys had again returned to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas remained, and resumed the work which had been interrupted by their visit to the Congress (A xv 30–35).

During this period, St Peter came to Antioch (Gal ii 11). Probably the tradition that he founded the Church at Antioch is based on this visit. On his arrival he found, as was to be expected after the happy emancipation in which he himself had been instrumental, all ceremonial punctilios buried. Jews and Gentiles in Christ were happily joining together in the Agape which was the bond of Christian charity and brotherhood.

As this blessed triumph over fifteen hundred years of bigotry was Peter's own work; as, in his capacity of First Apostle, he had been given on his housetop the official revelation of the final abrogation of all this miserable externalism, had thrice confessed his own profound acquiescence, and had with his own

hands sealed with Baptism the descent of the Holy Ghost on his first Gentile children; as, in fine, he had a short while since publicly vaunted these acts and proclaimed this faith before the highest authorities of the Church, condemning the perpetuation of these old ritualistic prejudices as "tempting of God": it is not surprising that, on his arrival at Antioch, he maintained his own principles by conforming to the new harmony and sitting down to table with the Gentiles.

But alas for that fear of human faces, which it seems the years of faithful fighting had not drained from the blood of this stalwart soldier of Christ. He who had at one moment sworn to die, and even drawn his sword, for his Master, and the next had thrice disowned Him to a servant-girl, now fell again into temptation; and how much more grave was this new fall! For then, raw and ignorant, unfortified by the Spirit, he had had excuse; but now, experienced in power from on high, veteran of the mighty signs and wonders of which he had been the channel in those doughty days, how much more cause had he to quit him manfully!

Then, though he had hurt his Lord's heart, he had not hindered His work; now, what harm might not be wrought to the slow-advancing cause, what old prejudices re-kindled, what scandal given! The salvation, through Israel, of the world—the dream of the prophets and the heart's ideal of Christ! And the wondrous harvest had actually come, and Peter had been chosen to reap its firstfruits and offer its wavesheaf: and—that Peter's feet should trample them! In the third command by the Lake

he had been bidden "Pasture My little Sheep"; duly had he turned his third Key and let them into the Fold: was this the way he "pastured" them? Did he thus "consolidate his brethren"? What was the silly sheepish moment with the High-Priest's servants, compared with this?

Christendom has punished Peter amply for that night of weakness, which the Lord with a look forgave; humility and fearfulness forbid us to judge him for this graver Denial; but, were we called upon to compare the two, could judgment falter? The first was but the presage of the second; the second could never have been, had Peter better remembered the first—and its pardon by the Lake and the wistful note of warning in the pardon. Nay, where were the more recent memories of the ominous Night of Prison—the Porch, the Maid-servant, the Knocking at the Door, and the "Going Out"?

The facts are simple. Some of the mischievous Judaisers whose pretence of Apostolic authority had already been indignantly repudiated by the Council (A xv 1, 24) came down to Antioch after Peter. The sort of fools who hold nothing sacred but themselves, and who would bring down heaven itself about their ears so long as they could pull wires, no doubt they thought it was their business to look after him. It was their duty to nip the new emancipation in the bud. We can see them; they have their Anglican counterparts to-day. Thanks to the watching brief they hold, we are informed as to what is "Catholic"—and what is not.

It was upon their appearance that St Peter (who

had been *too* "Catholic" for them) incredibly stultified, not only his own words at the recent Council, but the third and crowning masterpiece of his Divine election. Fearful of the blame or ridicule of these inflated dunderheads, he reclined at table with the Gentiles no more.[1] What God had cleansed, in direct disobedience he called common. Not that he had changed his mind. When he lied to please the girl, he had not changed his mind. In both cases, psychologically one, he dissembled his convictions for dread of ridicule—and by his action, in this second case, struck at the very root of Christian unity in Christ.

And so St Paul—wholly right in principle, though his expression of it may raise a question—"opposed him to the face, as standing condemned". By his banishing the Gentiles from his company, Peter had virtually reimposed upon them the ceremonial law (Gal ii 14). The other Jews joined with him in his "play-acting" (in the "Petrine Parable" he had been warned against the "play-actors", Mtt xxiv 51); even Barnabas, Paul's trusted friend who had been with him to the Council to protect the Gentile interests against these Pharisaic meddlers, "was swept away with the flood"; and thus by his example Peter involved them all in a recrudescence of the old slavery. May we not humbly surmise, with Lightfoot, that this new Denial ended as had its type on Maundy Thursday night: that Peter, soon or late, "went out, and wept bitterly"?

[1] The very sign and seal of his Cornelius-work, and the soul of its offence in the eyes of the Judaisers, had been "Thou didst *eat* with them!" (A xi 2). Now, this very act, reversed, becomes the symbol of his backsliding.

And now to the bearing of this incident on our finding about the call and status of St Peter; namely, that his special Rock-function ceased with its discharge, as intimated in Acts xii. Be it again noted that I do not advance the one as an evidence of the other. As such it would be neither necessary nor cogent. If Peter could sin as an Apostle he could sin as an Arch-Apostle. I do not know what to say about sin in a Vicar of Christ. I cannot even imagine a Vicar of Christ (except the Holy Spirit), so I am excused by incapacity from discussing so shocking a question. But so far as Peter's alleged "Supremacy" is concerned, his conduct of course has no more bearing upon the question than has that of Alexander the Sixth upon the Papal claims. Let us rescue Rome from her own suicidal committal —no human being is Infallible!

Yet while it proves nothing, the lapse at Antioch —which, as a collation of A xv with Gal ii shows plainly, is intended (for those who can read) to be placed in high relief against the Congress which it stultifies—carries a very forcible suggestion indeed. It suggests that Peter's special power against temptation, which so far as we read never failed him during his inaugurative work, *was coincident with his special rôle as Foundation.*

Let me recall what I said about Peter's "Angel". We saw that this "Angel", a very important factor in his work, loosed him from that first prison (A v 19); appeared to Cornelius, and directed him to where Peter was (x 3); and "departed from him" when his work was done (xii 10). And that Peter, at that last moment, "came to himself", and

" knew of a surety that the Lord had sent His Angel, and delivered him " (11). The secret of the great work of Peter's zenith, then, was this " Angel of the Lord ", deputed for his special enabling and protection. The sudden blossoming-out of the weakling of the Gospels into the hero of the first Pentecost—as also his sudden eclipse after his work was done—absolutely postulates such a provision.

The " Angel " was the minister or the symbol of a special Divine upbearing. Upon the new fervour which delivered Peter from the prison of his faulty nonage into his new and responsible office, there had waited the particular Divine energies and graces necessary and sufficient for it. During the decade of that sapping and mining, for which his bold and devoted temperament and strong physique made him so uniquely-fit an instrument, Peter was more than himself ; he was sustained by a supernatural exaltation.

But God's plans come to the full as human vessels wear out. When the need had been met and the debt paid, " the oil was stayed ". " When they had passed out through the third gate, the Angel departed from him ". They in Mark's mother's house (unless indeed they knew more than we think) prophesied when they said, " It is his angel " ; for a Power had been with Peter. God's grace is always sufficient, but not more. His parsimony is a richer largess than any waste.

Do I mean that God deserted His servant, when he had served His purpose ? Nay. We have the best of reasons for knowing that He reserved for

him a glorious martyrdom. God claims our best; He invests His powers in ours and takes the usufruct. But if He endows service, He has even tenderer and more patient graces for reaction.

And it was under reaction that Peter failed; and we shall see, both from that inexhaustible twelfth chapter of the Acts, and from other Scriptures, with what rich provisions of heartening help and guidance He was ready when the need arrived. For it is impossible to turn from Peter's first magnificence to this doctrinal suicide, without perceiving that *something* has departed from Peter. It is, precisely, the old Peter come back, as though that dynamic faith, which once sustained him as in an ecstasy of levitation, had at length failed, and he "began to sink".

It is thus with many of God's great ones; nobly they do their appointed work, successfully serve their turn; but the achieved purpose leaves an enfeebled soul. So Samson's light goes down in lust, and David's in vindictiveness, and Solomon's in materialism, and Hezekiah's in pride, and the Baptist's in doubt; lest any should say here, "Like the Perfect, I am perfected"; "Consummatum est". It is as though we are allowed to see this declension of Peter, and learn not to say of any mortal man, "He abideth a Priest continually".

All was well with Peter. The Lord had prayed for him that his faith might not fail. We have weighed his fault, not in the scales of his account with God, but in the sense of his Commission, and of the serious and awful claims based upon its permanence. If the long and utter silence, broken

only by the story of that lapse, be incompatible with a lifelong tenure of whatever Primacy Christ bestowed on St Peter, then between Peter and his alleged successors there is not only a *non sequitur*, but an abyss.

And I think there is more about St Peter in the Epistle to the Galatians, than this overt condemnation. The Antioch defection, with the public remonstrance to which it had led, was plainly notorious in the Church well before St Paul wrote ; the report of such an open issue between two such leaders would at once have been bruited through Christendom : otherwise St Paul would never thus have pilloried St Peter. But the Epistle bubbles throughout with a fresh indignation, whose very restraint is significant. Why should he be at pains to relate the Antioch incident, with its somewhat opprobrious detail, unless the fresh *gravamen*, which calls forth the Epistle, were in some way also connected with St Peter ?

And it is this that we seem to read between the lines throughout. In his wrath against the Judaisers who have been in Galatia, it is hard not to see that he has in special view a Personage ; who, since his own first or second visit, has contravened, either directly or by tacit sanction, his teaching there ; a person authoritative and exalted ; a person whose eminence—it may well be whose claim to his own respect and love—obliges the suppression of his name.

Observe the following passages. " There are some who are disturbing you, and want to pervert the gospel of the Christ. Now, even though we—*or an angel out of heaven*—should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to that which we proclaimed to you, *let him be* anathema ! " And then, pointedly, " As we have said before, so now again I say : *If anyone* proclaim to you a gospel other than that which you have received—*let him be* anathema ! Am I *now* ' conciliating men ' ? or God ? " Again, " O senseless Galatians—*who was it* that fascinated you ? " And, " A

little leaven leavens the whole lump . . . but *he who* is disturbing you shall bear his judgment (suggesting the κατεγνωσμένος of Antioch) *whoever he may be!*" (Gal i 7–10; iii 1; v 9, 10).

Someone, then, he regards as responsible for their reaction. It is someone of very great importance; and of spiritual importance: an ecclesiastical authority, not a heresiarch. Who is it? I cannot but feel that it is that same Peter, whom with his illustrious peers he elsewhere names openly in a similar spirit of independence: "Those who were reputed to be something (whatever they were, it makes no difference to me—God does not accept man's person)"; "James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be Pillars" (ii 6, 9). And to this agrees i 10, where after his "anathema" outburst he asks, "*Now*, am I conciliating men?" What point would there be in this insistent disclaimer of sycophancy, unless the culprit were in some high way distinguished? And whom had he been from the first accused of conciliating, by his conversion to Christianity, but Peter and his compeers?

And I shall risk, in a region where there is so much suggestive allusion, the charge of fancifulness. "Seeing that I have taken upon myself to plead," I shall ask the reader's attention to the use in this Epistle of two compounds of κόπτειν. In v 7 he asks, "*Who* has cut off your road (ἐνέκοψε)?" and a little later (12) as though by a mental association, comes a burst of indignation truly Pauline; "I wish that they who are upsetting you would mutilate themselves (ἀποκόψονται)!" meaning, Why do they stop at circumcision—why not do as the heathen priests, and go all the way?

Now ἀπέκοψεν is the word used in Jn xviii 10 of the cutting-off of Malchus' ear. Is it not conceivable that St Paul, who cared nothing for persons where "his Gospel" was in jeopardy, should have winged his indignation with an allusion which—questionable as its taste might be, and whether its hearers understood it or not—would be equally

innoxious to Peter? For, even were it understood — and I make no doubt the story was verbally well known, for it was structural both to the preaching of the Passion and to Peter's own public spiritual history, and St Peter would be himself the first to tell the tale with humble awe and thankfulness —it could not hurt a name whose glory, like St Paul's own, could well afford the enhancing background of a victory; and would do less discredit to the well-laid Foundation of the Church, than to the momentary self-control of a passionate lover of his Lord.

Another significant outburst is towards the close of the Letter. "The sort that desire to cut a fine figure in external things, these compel you to be circumcised—only that, in the cross of the Christ, they may not be persecuted! For even the circumcision-party do not keep the law themselves!" Suppressing the reminiscence of Jn xxi 18, which seems to leap from the extraordinary phrase "be persecuted in (on) the cross of Christ", we must say that this passage gives to think. For it suggests some Judæo-Christian group, or especially person, who is fully aware in conscience of the abrogation of the law in Christ, but through a shrinking fear of the offence of the Cross condones the circumcision of Christian converts in deference to Jewish and Judaistic opinion; which is the very spirit censured in the act at Antioch.

And this party, or person, is one whose "interest" in them is not in itself undesirable, were it only in a better cause. The gospel he has given them (if I may differ from Lightfoot, l.c.) is ἕτερον indeed, but it is not ἄλλο: it is the one Gospel, only under a perverted form (i. 7). And St Paul does not wish to claim a monopoly in serving them; he is not objecting to this person's intervention on that ground: "It is good to be taken interest in—in a *good* cause—at all times, and not only when I am with you!" And then, in a rush of jealousy for a "motherhood" which he feels has been usurped by another whose greatness has "bewitched" them, he breaks out "My little children,

who have renewed a mother's pangs in me ! " (iv 17–19). Does not all this, with all the rest, suggest the person and position of St Peter—and the feelings with which their difficult relationship, despite a deep oneness in Christ, cannot have failed at times to stir St Paul's emotional soul ?

If I am right, we are faced with nothing stranger than a characteristic sudden anger, at a very trying period in his life, which no more reflects upon St Paul's real communion with St Peter, than did another " sharp contention " throw him out of charity with Barnabas ; or than any passing strife of conscience between true Christian ministers need be presumed as severing the charitable bond of the common yoke of Christ. Nor does it charge any greater sin to Peter, than a later access of that moral timidity, which we have already seen at Antioch ; and which collided with a principle which to his ardent brother was dearer than life itself.

Such incidents, as touching the mutual charity and co-operation of the two great pioneers of our Religion, were not nearly so extraordinary and far less soul-corroding than they may seem to us, after twenty centuries of haloed reverence for both. We may credit Christ's heroes with more unity of purpose and a better sense of values, than some of our critical wiseacres allow them. They were not fools ; and they were leashed in a fight to the death.

Yet, if true, our findings illustrate our point. From the address of his First Epistle we surmise that Galatia had formed a part of the wide field of St Peter's labours after his departure from Jerusalem. The incident at Antioch we may place in the early " fifties " ; the two visits of St Paul to Galatia previous to his Epistle, A.D. 51 and 54 ; his Epistle to the Galatians about A.D. 57–58.

If, then, I have not strained interpretation, my contention about St Peter is confirmed. *Functus officio*, for at least a second time after the withdrawal of the " genius " of his Charter, Peter has met the Maidservant (see p. 195).

CHAPTER VII

Spiritual Reaction (Traditional)

"Another shall gird thee—and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" Jn xxi 18

As a comment upon the temporary nature of the special Commission of St Peter, I have adduced the Lapse at Antioch. I have suggested that this recrudescence of his old weakness marks, and that its record is intended by the Spirit to indicate, a spiritual reaction from a period of special Divine upholding.

It may however be answered that this action (a) in the absence of any other evidence of similar nature, shows nothing more than a momentary and venial indiscretion such as may befall the stoutest Saint, or (b) that it may have been dictated by reasons of well-meaning policy, wise or otherwise, misconceived or disapproved by the *ex parte* hot-headedness of St. Paul. Such special pleading, though it seems to us strained and unconvincing, would commend itself to our feelings; yet it would not modify our main contention in the slightest. Could the story of Antioch be proved an actual forgery, the conclusions we have drawn from patent facts would stand serene.

But there is yet a further addition to our data about St Peter, which, if its credentials be altogether

on a different plane from inspiration, puts in strong claim to our notice on the ground (a) of its completing harmony with facts explicit and implicit, and (b) of the lack of motive for its fabrication. As this evidence deposes to another lapse of spiritual courage on St Peter's part; and that in striking tally (a) with his known defect of character, (b) with all Divine prediction and omen concerning him, (c) with the precise period of his life concerning which he is repeatedly warned—that is, the day of his death, and (d) with the psychology of the lapse at Antioch: I conceive that I should simply be obscuring issues if I did not bring it forward.

And my point in doing so lies supremely here: that the time of his life, at which this evidence finds St Peter still consistent to his characteristic weakness, is *his last day on earth*. If it be accepted (and the reader is referred to his own critical scales) the conclusion is clear. Practically the whole of the residue of St Peter's life, after the "departure of his Angel", lies between two parallels—each of which is marked by a fall under his besetting temptation.

The source of the story in question is not an inspired writing, but a very ancient and persistent tradition. If I draw upon evidence of this order (a quiver well left to bowmen less curious to fledge their arrows with authority) it is not for the war of argument, but for the archery of illustration. *Non tali auxilio.*

St Ambrose it is who tells the story, known also in part to Origen,[1] of *Domine Quo Vadis;* of Peter's

[1] See Tillemont, *Mém.* i. p. 187, and 555. Origen quotes an apocryphal work.

flight, at the instance of his devoted faithful, from Nero's brands; of the Apparition in the Appian Way, the wistful word of wounded Love, the contrite tears with which, as William Watson sings, "Peter turned, and rushed on Rome and death". It is hard to deem it likely that this story should have been invented; for it does less than credit, superficially at least, to St Peter; whose ecclesiastical hypertrophy is nowhere if not in the soil of tradition. And even so, it can be accounted for only by the existence of a traditional consciousness of weakness based on known cases, in St Peter's later life.

As to its meaning, I cannot follow Mgr Barnes's attempt to soften it into a glorification of St Peter. He says of his flight, "He goes, although longing for martyrdom"; and regards our Lord's appearance as "a special honour to His *alter ego*", revealing to him that He "was about to suffer, not in the place of St Peter, but in his person"—in "fulfilment of a promise made so long ago".[1] Certainly the story enhances the glory of Peter's death, just because it makes of it a victory over temptation; but to pretend that it was anything else, not only wrests the plain meaning, but robs St Peter of an infinitely-greater honour than the somewhat tawdry substitute it bases on a question-begging of his "vicariate".

That Peter's death should have crowned a victory over fierce temptation is in perfect harmony, not only with the Lord's dark presage after forgiving his Denial (Jn xxi 18, 19), but most remarkably, as I shall later show, with the marks of destiny which

[1] St Peter in Rome, ch. iv.

underscore all the foreshortened record of his life. He leaves the boat and ventures on the water to Jesus, but in the process " begins to sink "—and the Lord raises him up. His death is always shadowed forth as a precipitate self-surrender: he " stretches forth his hands " ; he " casts himself into the Sea " ; he " runs to enter the Tomb " : there is about it all the reaction from some unworthy impulse. He " sleeps "—in Gethsemane, on the housetop, in the prison—and from the " sleep " of unwatchfulness is always " awakened ". Origen's story of his declaring himself unworthy to die in the same posture as his Master appears, I think, theatrical, unless as betokening some contrite shame.

Yet I press none of the details of the story. It may be true, or it may be a perversion of the truth. I may be answered that it makes him die Bishop of Rome. Let him die Bishop of twenty Romes ; it does not make him Vicar of Christ. I contend only for its implications about Peter's soul. I urge that its existence, and persistence to the time of St Ambrose, in the face of the growing cult of the hero of the Church's childhood, speaks for *some* struggle in connexion with Peter's death ; and that such struggle is postulated by the sinister counterpoint which underlies his whole life as told in Scripture.

In this case, then, we have the period—roughly A.D. 46 to 64, almost the whole remainder of the life of this great Founder after his formal discharge from function—not only shrouded in mysterious and utter darkness, but bounded by two falls of the same spiritual order, and that accordant with all

we know of his character's peculiar defect. The logical issue of this admission is to involve that whole period in possibilities of spiritual struggle never conceivably fatal to Peter, but certainly hard to reconcile with any survival of the responsibility borne by him in Acts i–xii.

For if this had been the Peter of Pentecost, of the Gate Beautiful, of Joppa and Caesarea, would not the gates of Hades have prevailed? what then of that later and far darker time of many churches, of love growing cold, of increasing heresy, lapse, and discord, of looming persecution, as the clouds gathered to the End? Had earthly "Head" or "Vicar of Christ" been needed, would such a Peter have availed those days? To the bold spiritual anabasis of the first time, his great spirit was borne forward with all the equipment of a special creation; is this to say that such a man was apt to organisation and control in troublous days, to the slow tedium and crushing responsibility of a world-charge not conceivably commensurable with any human power at all—to say nothing of the gathering whirlwind of the Lord's predicted Judgment, the *sauve qui peut* of the coming wreck of dispensations, the vials of wrath poised over harlot Jerusalem and the kingdom of the Beast, the daily hope and dread of the Parousia? If not—would not the Lord have chosen better?

Now does the reader see where we have arrived? Peter's life seems all at once to have become very large and very small. It is as though, poring over a vague and vast mosaic, we withdrew to a distance, and turned and looked—and lo, the pattern! The

Court of the High Priest ; Antioch ; Quo Vadis—what are they but Three Denials ? The *real* Three Denials, these ; foreseen and foretold so solemnly, sadly, and circumstantially by our Lord ; infinitely of more import than the mere enumeration of the faults of that night of spiritual childhood. A fuller, wider reading, this ; one more worthy of the dignity of prophetic evolution. The careful record, in all four Gospels, of *three* Denials predicted, three Denials made ; the *threefold* question and commission springing out of them in Jn xxi ; the sign of three, which haunts Peter's whole life, from his first call to his exodus in the Acts : be sure this signature, written everywhere upon the pupillage and little things of Peter, has its answer in the great issues which punctuate his crowded and mysterious life.

Our field as yet has been the childish letter of the Word ; this treasure lies a little below the surface. Consider that " night " of Denial. It had more than twelve hours in its true content. The key is the " Cock-crow ". Twelve times in the New Testament is the " Crowing " (φωνέω) of the " Cock " (ἀλέκτωρ) mentioned : by our Lord of St Peter's Denial, seven times ; by the Evangelists of the event, five. But there is a thirteenth occurrence of the idea, in quite a different connexion. This is in Mk xiii 35, where (and here only) we have the single word " Cock-crow " (ἀλεκτροφωνία). In this passage we read : " Watch, therefore ; for you know not when the Lord of the House cometh—whether at Even, or at Midnight, or at Cock-crowing, or at Dawning ; lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping ".

The mystery is out, then. It is eschatological.

The real "Night" is the period remaining before the Parousia, the forty years (let us call it) which covered the overlap of "that generation" and the next (Mtt xxiv 34, xvi 28). This "Night," of which Jesus so often spoke (Mtt xxv 6; Jn ix 4, xi 10) was to end in the Parousia-Dawn. Thrice before its "Cock-crow", or "Third Watch", Peter was to deny Him. Its "Fourth Watch", or last, would bring the Lord: "About the Fourth Watch of the Night He came to them, walking on the Sea" (Mk vi 48). Before then, Peter would have been martyred; as the Lord foretold (Jn xxi 18). Thus we owe to St Mark, the Petrine Evangelist, the meaning of "Cock-crow"; of the "Fourth Watch of the Night"; and (exceptionally) the fact, which he twice repeats, of Peter's denying "before the cock crow *twice*" (Mk xiv 30). Of these warnings, and how they were given, we shall speak in their place. For the Parousia, I can only refer the reader to Mtt xxiv 15–30, where our Lord synchronises it with the Destruction of Jerusalem.[1] Other eschatologies may find better acceptance; they all violate what is written.

The instant this real light bursts upon us, we are quit for ever of a great delusion. Not only have we begun to learn that Peter's real history lies wrapt up in his probationership, but we have vindicated our Lord's sense of proportion. For we perceive that our Lord's concern was not confined to a hasty slip of the yet-unregenerate Peter, both previous and harmless to the vast work for which He was training him. It looked on to issues immensely greater,

[1] See Introduction, pp. 15–35.

In Peter, a world's salvation was in the balance. A moment's cold aversion from what "God had cleansed," and the Rock of the Gentiles might be proved a quicksand; a moment's "seeking his own life" when the Lord's honour called him to death, and that whole life would go down to the scorn of ages: in either or any such case, there was vital peril to the Eternal Purpose of God. And the Lord foreknew. In the seed of the present He read the future. And by His wise treatment of that first symptom of Peter's malady He saved the world. Three times—it may be thirty-three times three—Peter "remembered the word that Jesus had said"; and the Cock-crowing.

It may be said that my solution of Peter's fatal number, in these three lapses recorded or rumoured of him, overstrains both history and mystery. Be it so. Doubtless our masters in Israel, who have the "whole Truth" and should know all about their first Pope since they know so much more than we, can set me right in all matters which touch the hidden lore of Peter. For it is unutterably vast and deep, and any sort of Petrology which ignores or misses it is a dangerous school for the instruction and homeward guidance of the sheep of Christ.

My picture was long since defined and clear; I have given it a frame, not essential to its completeness, but of much service to its display. St Peter's Apostolic life falls cleanly and sheerly into two parts; the former covers roughly a decade, the latter two. The one is the tale of a brilliant ascendant, unparalleled on earth, flecked with no cloud of inconstancy, checked by no shock to fealty or faith.

The other lies in an abyss of silence, mystery, and spiritual shadow. "What was become of Peter?" By now we know at least what was not. We know what his Charter was, and what its limits. The rest is but the penumbra which throws it into relief.

SECTION C

Conclusion

CHAPTER VIII

" Not laying a Foundation again ! " Heb vi 1

Let us review the whole of our surface-sketch of St Peter, and put the claims of the Roman See by the side of it.

The claims of the Roman See may be likened to a chain. For they are expressed in a long series of Supreme Pontiffs, Visible Heads of the Church, Doctors and Teachers of all the Faithful, and Supreme Infallible Judges on all controversies of faith. This chain of potentates depends from what we may call a staple ; namely, from our Lord's alleged bestowal of these prerogatives upon St Peter for life. And between the staple and the chain is assumed a key-ring, which fastens the two together : namely, the position that our Lord intended the prerogatives in question to be transmitted from Peter to a line of successors.

Now, before this " chain " can be established, we must have, not the " staple " only, but the " key-ring " too. If it be proved that our Lord made Peter His " Vicar " and supreme, it has still to be shown (a) that He intended this authority to be transfer-

able ; and (b) those who claim it must adduce their credentials at His Mouth—or, at the very least, at Peter's. To the credit (shall we say ?) of Roman Catholic propagandists neither has ever been attempted. The achievement of one "Second Christ", a *magnum opus* indeed, has no doubt dispensed all minor logical exigencies. And indeed if it could be proved to us that the first age of the Church required and received such an imitation-Head, we might conceivably find it difficult to show cause why the after-ages should be different ; though such a conviction would not assist our veneration for a Divine Wisdom which had made no sort of known arrangement for so vital a necessity ; nor for the conscientious statesmanship of St Peter in not making definite dispositions to secure the succession ; or if he did so, we should have expected any chronicler of the "Acts of the Apostles" to have recorded it with at least as much particularity as he gave, for instance, to the name of Mark's mother's housemaid.

But when we come to claimants, this sort of thing will not do. We want to know when, and why, and how, St Peter settled this quasi-Divine entail on the Bishops of Rome. Rome is a far cry from Caesarea Philippi, where Peter received his trust ; and if he was Bishop there, what had it to do with his charge as Rock ? All that was "Rock" in him was fulfilled and done with long before ; and a Bishop is not a Rock ; a Rock underlies, a Bishop oversees. Moreover, the last we ever hear of Peter is St Paul's statement that the two had agreed that Peter should "go to the Circumcision" ; in that case Rome,

full of Jews though it was, is a curious place to find him the enthroned founder of a dynasty. If he was Head of the Church, the natural place would have been Jerusalem; seeing that the Christian Church was child of the Jewish, born at Jerusalem and there nursed and weaned by Peter.

Indeed, the only act recorded of him which faintly resembles the appointment of a successor, took place at Jerusalem—when he sent an official farewell message to "James"! (A xii 17). To abandon the Mother-Church to the control of a very "junior" Apostle, if Peter was Supreme Head, was curiously like a captain inviting the second mate to take his place on the bridge? And in fine, since we are arguing *a priori* (no doubt the habit is catching) we should hardly expect to find St Peter, or anyone else, pre-occupied about starting dynasties at a time when the whole Church was fearfully preparing for judgment; when Peter himself could write, "The end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet iv 7).

The whole matter, either as a truth or as a falsity, is ineffably important, as serious as heaven and earth. Our Lord would never have suspended it upon the threads of conjectural interpretation and local hearsay. That St Peter was Bishop of Rome is not proven as a fact, and, as a probability, highly prejudiced by the absence of any sort of suggestion in the archives of the Church's planting; that he designated or understood his successors in that See as his heirs in any such awful function as Divine Vicegerency, is a conception as devoid of any tincture of historic colour as it is wildly remote from any hint of Christ. It is as palpable an

instance of *ex post facto* eponymity as the legend of Romulus.

But the devolution from Peter is only the "key-ring", from which the "chain" depends. And happily we are dispensed from worrying about it. For the "key-ring" depends on the "staple". And the staple, be reminded, is the assertion that Christ made Peter His permanent Vicar on earth. If this position be found false, we need not concern ourselves with what depends from it. The pretensions of the Holy See are in the air. To exchange the figure for one of Mr. Birrell's,[1] the world is placed quite comfortably upon the elephant, and the elephant gracefully upon the tortoise; but the unfortunate tortoise may rest upon what it may.

In search of the truth about St Peter, then, we first examined our Lord's Commission to him; and formed a clear conclusion as to what He intended to convey. Peter was to *base* and *open* the Kingdom of God on earth. For this purpose, and to this extent, we found that he was made to be a focus of the Apostolic powers. While no power or right was bestowed upon him beyond those shared by all the Twelve, all that was theirs was to be concentrated and represented in him—for this purpose, and to this extent. In this inceptive work, he was—in words used by the Lord elsewhere—to "consolidate, or 'ground,' his brethren".

This charge, by its very terms, we found to be, purely and simply, *Inaugurative*. Our findings amounted to the paraphrase, "I wish you to superintend, and take a leading part in, the *Inauguration*

[1] *Obiter Dicta.*

of My Kingdom on earth; I wish its *Foundation* to be laid in your person and work; I wish you to be in especial the means of *opening* it to all believers". Both these functions, that of Rock and that of Key-bearer, are aspects of one; and that one, by its terms, not only does not warrant, but precludes, the notion of a succession of Peters; for it refers to a Finite Act, which is of a character *ipso facto* unrepeatable. For Founding and Opening are acts capable neither of indefinite continuance, nor of subsequent renewal. They are permanent, not in action, but in effect.

Peter's charge, therefore, was not indefinite, but finite. It was limited in duration. A point must come, both in time and scope, when it was complete. It was therefore not an Office, but an Act. Thus it had no reference to the duration of Peter's lifetime, but only to its own discharge. It was objective, not subjective; a legacy, not a life-interest; a command, not to be, but to do; a trust whose discharge liberated its trustee *ipso facto*. It conferred, therefore, no life-office upon St Peter; and indeed no office at all. It was an informal arrangement made by the Lord with a body of men who in the light of the Spirit would perfectly understand Him and one another, for a creative period pregnant with agony of difficulty and danger and bounded with judgment.

Should Peter survive his prominent part in this travail-day of the work of God, he would be, apart from it and after it, just an Apostle; and once it was completed, though he lived on for many years, he would carry—beyond a pioneer's glorious memory

crowned with whatever Apostolic heroism he might have subsequently achieved - no shred of distinctive character to the grave; much less would he be capable of bequeathing, after death, any succession other than Apostolic. Such was our reading of the Commission. Should it be confirmed by Peter's own, we said, the Papal Claims will simply excuse our attention. The question of balloting for a new Peter in every generation will not even arise.

Our next care, then, was to discover how Peter and his brethren read his Charter. Only from an account of its discharge could we learn this. Such an account was to hand—as exhaustive as we could possibly desire—in the inspired official history of the Acts. Here was a crucible in which all "claims" should find the most searching of tests. We found our reading confirmed to the uttermost. We found St Peter *basing* and *opening* the Church in precise accordance with his instructions; and this in three great successive acts, agreeing to his Master's plan.

While engaged upon this work, Peter is illustrious and paramount. He is the Church's central figure. Yet in his every act it is carefully shown that he expresses the unction and authority of all the Twelve. Though first among them, he is in no sense their head, but their hand and mouth; in his every utterance we hear them speaking, nor does he once wield power or right not vested in them all.

So over the whole area of his activities and theirs, as upon a wide foundation, rise the first stones of a Society which finally, with the incorporation of Cornelius, embraces potentially all the earth. This

"end of the beginning" attained, he vanishes in a dramatic exodus from the scene. His only further mention, in the remaining and larger half of the history, represents him as taking a secondary place, and referring in retrospective terms to his former glory.

For the rest, the searchlight of history follows the fortunes of a new Apostle, who, taking up his work from the point at which he left it and building upon his last foundation, expands the local sect rough-hewn by him into a temple world-wide. And this successor, in scope and duration of activity and in personal claim to greatness, far outvies St Peter; though the latter remains his unchronicled contemporary for twenty years. It is those twenty years that are fatal alike to the Supremacy of Peter and to its alleged link with posterity.

Our reading of the Charter, then, was correct, for it was Peter's own. But, lest this should be too little, a side-light fell across the page. Not long after Peter's great work is completed, his weakness comes back! He does a thing which publicly stultifies his last and greatest act. This solemn Opener of the Gospel to the world is led by fear of appearances to a *volte face* which implicitly closes it again; and this soon after a frank appropriation, in full assembly, of his own recent instrumentality—and an urgent plea for the removal of the last barrier. Here, then, is a second Denial; and a more serious: both in that Peter had for so long led the Lord's armies in the Holy Ghost, and for the reason that the Catholic Religion, whose weaning he thus endangered, was the head and front of the Purpose of God.

This incident, we said, confirms the parting of Peter's life into two periods, by suggesting that the mantle of his spiritual hey-day had fallen from him; that the flaming consciousness of election, corresponding with a special outpouring of power offensive and defensive, which had borne him triumphantly to his goal, had passed from him—leaving him the more exposed to an inherent, besetting weakness.

And when we remembered the tradition of a similar weakness at Peter's death—unproven indeed, but hard to account for apart from some nucleus of truth—we could not but relate the two. Between them there would lie, roughly, eighteen years; the life of Peter from the Congress to his death. If this period be found beginning and ending with weakness, and of the same order; and that weakness known to be characteristic of Peter, and specially apprehended by our Lord in connexion with his death: we begin strongly to suspect the period itself. We feel that some change must have come over Peter, the spiritual giant of the "first works"; not a change in love and faith and patience, but a reaction from the high mountain air, the *noblesse oblige* of illustrious service; a nakedness to temptation, such as could only enhance the glory of victory.

And when we sought some mark of division between the two periods, we found the twelfth chapter of the Acts. Our eyes were opened as we read, and we followed Peter as in a dream reconstructing in signs and symbols the great threefold Function he was laying down; emerging, through the "gates" his

Keys had opened, from the "prison" of a constraining faithfulness, into the perils of a less responsible life; the "departure of his Angel from him," his "coming to himself"; his "exodus," and "departure to another place." And when we listened to the ominous undertones and Denial-motives that pervade this fateful overture—which will be considered in their place—we felt that the spiritual conflicts which awaited Peter must have been many and severe.

What then emerges from it all? A very serious issue. Had Peter died in the enjoyment of any kind of superior office, the transmission of that office, though attested neither by Divine authority nor historic evidence, might have been a tenable opinion. As it is, the admitted interval of twenty years between his resignation and his death makes it an inconceivable absurdity. Had the office in question been in any sense whatever a chronic one, there might be nothing directly unreasonable in the position that its permanent representation was necessary to the Church. Seeing, however, that it was purely episodic, and designed to meet circumstances which can never again arise any more than can the creation of the world, the idea of its perpetuation is the very prince of fallacies.

But would that protest could stop here. For fallacy is patched with presumption. Any scaffolding will do for an imperial idea; and if the character of Peter's office be the trouble, why, it must be changed! It is argued that he was a creator, and you cannot create twice. Very well; he shall be made a Governor or Over-ruler. So

Peter is taken out from under the Church, where God laid him, and put *over* the Church – where never for an hour was he either authorised or minded to be. Instead of an interior symbol of the evolution whereby the Church unfolded from Judaism, he is made into a principle exterior and superior to her, endowed with an independent authority. He is empowered to pronounce, on faith and morals, "definitions irreformable in their own nature and not because of the consent of the Church" (Pastor Aeternus, cap. 4). After this, all is easy. If such an asset was necessary to the Church for one generation, or even for one hour, it is needed for all time! Reduce this to the simplest terms. What does it mean? It means that Rome, in order to be a repeater of Peter, *has found it necessary to revise a Foundation into a Topstone.* Popes cannot be set under the Church; therefore they are set over it. Now this is a flat usurpation of the prerogative of Christ. Scripture teaches us with one voice that "Christ Jesus Himself is the Head Corner Stone" —the High Keystone of the living Temple of God. Of Him said Isaiah, "Behold, I lay in Sion a precious Corner Stone" (xxviii 16); and the Psalmist, "The Stone which the builders rejected is become the Head of the Corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Ps cxviii 22); and He, in Mtt xxi 42, most solemnly appropriated these words to Himself. Of this Topstone Zechariah prophesied, "He shall bring forth the Head-Stone with shoutings, crying Grace, grace unto it" (Z iv 7).

This Corner-Stone is carefully distinguished from

the Foundation, as though the grievous confusion had been foreseen : " You are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief Corner Stone ". Other corner-stones are set in place when the building is completed ; this one already mystically surmounts the Temple of the Church, and she is " growing up to " It (Eph ii 20–22, iv 15, 16).

And St Peter himself—who must surely weep in heaven to know himself a Stone of Stumbling and so misconceived, tells the same tale of this " Chief Corner Stone ", and of all Christians as " living stones coming to It " to be " built up thereto " (1 Pet ii 4–8). "*He* is the Stone ", said this same Peter[1] in the act of laying himself down as Foundation, " He is the Stone which is made the Head of the Corner ; and there is no other name under heaven, wherein we must be saved " (A iv 11, 12). There should be no mistake as to what Stone is *over* the Church ; for the prophecies of Isaiah and the Psalmist are the refrain of the New Testament.

Thus we conclude the entire assumption not only based upon loose thought and careless reading, but gravely injurious to the prerogative of our Divine Lord. And neither by its antiquity, nor by the number or assured tenacity or admitted goodness of its votaries, should we permit ourselves to be charmed into oblivion of its true nature. For indeed Papalism is not so old as the hydra of Gnosticism, nor are its confessors half as numerous as Buddhists and Brahmins ; nor is corporate or

[1] Answering the Petrine Question himself.

personal goodness any guarantee in doctrine, or organised assent a presumption of truth.

We may yield to none in tribute to the spiritual majesty and glory of the Roman Catholic Church—and be devoutly thankful to disclaim the onus of reconciling her approved beauty with the megalomania which is at once its co-efficient and its blemish. But there are three blessings for which it is neither Pharisaic to be thankful nor uncharitable to fight: an open charter, clear heads, and spiritual freedom.

PART II

COROLLARY—THE SPIRITUAL MYSTERY OF PETER

SECTION A

The Foresight of the Physician

CHAPTER IX

Peter's Dual Weakness

"A kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off" Jn xviii 26

We have watched St Peter carrying out, with undaunted courage and swerveless faithfulness, through its three prescribed stages, the Inaugurative Commission which his Lord had laid upon him. We have seen the Church of God founded upon the Rock, and opened with the Keys. We have seen the last and crowning stage of this work followed by a solemn and even dramatic finale, purporting—if the twelfth chapter of the Acts is to be regarded as anything but an interpolated affront to the intelligent reader of history—Peter's formal discharge and retirement from all that functionally marked him out as a distinctive agent among the Apostles. His Commission is lifted from him, because he has discharged it; he "goes out", "departs to" "a different place", and is "not found"; and to the remaining and longer part of the history, in which the main line of the Church's fortunes is traced through the acts of another

Apostle, his name is not known—save in an incident which seems designed to give us a glimpse of him as occupant of that " different place ".

All this is but the natural issue of the terms of his Commission, as interpreted in the light of a plain man's common sense. Could we imagine such a man, strange to the Christian story and with a conscious and subconscious mentality free from the distorting glamour of a venerable misrepresentation, reading Mtt xvi 18, 19 and the Book of the Acts for the first time : he would find in the latter only what the former had led him to expect.

So far so good. But we have seen much more than this ; much that supplies, indeed, superfluous confirmation ; but at the price of a very startling discovery. There is strong reason to believe that Peter's Exodus, by the symbolic detail of its setting, portends for Peter a future far less immune from temptation, and even from spiritual weakness, than the charmed and brilliant period of his ascendant. The episode of his " Departure " is so framed as to surround him, at every point, with painful reminders of his own long-past frailty as shown on the night of Passion, which we might have thought he had by now earned the right to forget ; and with thinly-veiled warnings, which he could not possibly mistake, to be true to his Lord till death.

And when we peer into the almost-total darkness of his after-life for some justification of these omens, we are startled to find St Paul, in the only incident recorded of St Peter outside the Acts, laying to his charge an acted denial of the greatest and most sacred of his own achievements in the cause of

Christ—the opening of the "iron gate" which was the longed-for opening of His Heart to all the world; and this, arrestingly, in the very circumstances and spirit of that first Denial—that is, after a strong protestation of loyalty, and through fear of the faces of men.

And then (with no undue credulity but irresistibly intrigued by significance) we come upon an ancient legend, recommended at least by age and by the hardihood of its reflection upon the immemorial hero of Christendom, which purports to close St Peter's life, long afterwards, with another act of moral fearfulness; enhancing indeed the glorious issue of his martyrdom, but none the less consistent both with his peculiar weakness and with the presages which connected it with his death.

Thus all that we know about the long after-life of St Peter (if we are to take this story into account) is the fact that it lies between two parallels, both of them involving lapses of spiritual courage cognate with the fall of Maundy Thursday night. Do we strain probability if we take this as an indication that the period intervening was threaded with the vein of that weakness, that susceptibility to a certain kind of temptation, which was constitutional to Peter's spirit—but which, under the inspired exaltation of his glorious zenith, had lain in comparative abeyance? that he was beset with a fiercer foe, a harder struggle, now that his "Angel had departed from him"? If it be so—and though we have no direct evidence for it, we shall adduce a mass of indicative circumstance which practically amounts to proof—no despite will be done to the

holy heroism of Peter. The gravity of the conflict is the measure of the conqueror's glory.

Yet in such a conception, though there is nothing unnatural, there is much to astonish us. It revives the whole question of the psychology of Peter. For even when we contemplate the single act of Antioch, we wonder greatly how so triumphant a progress of spiritual intrepidity can have been so quickly followed by so petty and dismal an anti-climax. This weak-kneed surrender, to a handful of disapproving ritualists, of the new and glorious liberty of which he had but lately been the almost-passionate sponsor : how does it compare with the first high-hearted flouting of Annas and Caiaphas and all the majesty of the Sanhedrin ?

Ask how the fervid vow of the Cenacle could have been followed in an hour by the truckling to the servant-girl. Peter must have been a man of very complex character. Such dauntless initiative the world never saw before or since ; but somewhere there must have lurked a spot of weakness whose perdurance was as extraordinary. A decade of intrepid campaigning *contra mundum* could not touch it ; the long protective election of the Spirit, confirmed with signs and wonders, had not healed it. Just one flaw, and that a grave one ; invariable in its manifestation ; a deep scotch upon the edge of a magnificently-tempered sword.

What is Peter's ethical record ? By what super-wise treatment did His Master ever train him for such a work ? What are we to think of the Divine insight, which estimated the strength against the weakness, daring the fine experiment of choosing

him for such a responsibility? Judas could disappoint; how near, in Peter, was the balance? Was our Lord never anxious? Was Peter the subject of those long nights of prayer upon the mountains? Does His training of Peter, so far as it is recorded for us, give any indication of specific hopes and fears: His infallible presentiments so to say, regarding the development of Peter's character, and the credit with which he would acquit himself in the mighty trust which was to place in his wavering hands the whole issue of His own martyr-labours for the human race? We shall see.

And did He, of His divine forethought, make any provision for the stay and sustenance of Peter, after He should have left the earth, in those principles of loyalty and courage which were to be so essential both to his living function and to the honourable testimony of his death? He provided a guardian for His Mother; did he provide any spiritual friend and mentor for Peter, upon whose imperilled faithfulness depended the very creation of His Church—the Mother of us all? Peter, above all men a man, remained a child to the end; a friendless Peter, an unguarded unguided Peter for thirty years—would surely be a precarious hazard for the upbuilding Church, even if only one-third of the time should suffice for his capital function; and if he was to be Supreme Head for life and Infallible King—*quis custodiet custodes?*

Again, we shall see. But much that we shall see will not stand out in black and white upon the page. Our path henceforth is mainly downwards, delving beneath the letter; for it is in allegory,

in acted reminiscence, in subtle *mise-en-scène* and hinted warning, that Peter's inner history lies. There are many whose exegetic asset is their contempt for this plane of interpretation. I congratulate them; their critical blinkers at least exempt them from the perils of imagination, which wait upon vision; and it may certainly be said with truth, that no merely intuitive percept can be proved. I suggest that they should spare themselves the grievance of reading me further; they may put the book down at this point. The nature and limitations of "Peter's Charter, as Peter read it", should be already established on the plane of their intelligence. What follows is little more than illustrative corollary.

First, however, we must examine Peter's character, and trace the stages of the tireless process by which our Lord from the beginning educated him for the most tremendous trust ever conferred upon mortal man. The illustrious choice of Peter for this task was based upon his exceptional qualifications for it. So brilliant was his promise of the special capacities required as to justify the Elective Wisdom in incurring the grave defects of their quality. Never was venturous intrepidity more ideally blent with susceptibility to spiritual passion—the combination essential in a rough-hewer of the Kingdom of God in a world come to the last gasp of corruption. "Thou shalt be called Cephas", said his omniscient Taskmaster to him at first sight; and that stout and loving heart, once possessed and ruled by the Spirit of Jesus, could not fail to justify His choice; for on no rock save burning love and

aggressive bravery could be raised, in Satan's realms, a human Temple of the Most High God.

For no enduring throne was Peter qualified; for no throne at all: did not the terms of his election make that unthinkable, the most cursory study of Peter's character would preclude it. Unchastened impulse, unschooled affection, unregulated enterprise, capable of sanctification as they may be, are not the material men select who seek one to rule and organise. If the Lord saw one clear and capital talent in Peter's face that first day, I think it was "Initiative". Passion is the quality of a Pioneer, the man to plant a flag; and the salient fact in Peter was that he was passionate. To what man, save One, was it ever given to seize and to maintain, to be a Captain and a King?

But Peter's nobly-passionate nature had the precise defects which wait upon it. Two constitutional strains of weakness held it very far from perfection: *moral fearfulness and a tendency to aggression*. These fruits of character may seem to be contradictory, until their stem be seen. That stem was Pride.

A man who trusts in his own strength will be, according to the stimulus of occasion, both coward and brawler. Pre-occupied with his personal credit, behold him between the poles of cravenness and self-assertion, false shame and hothead self-confidence; touch him on the quick, and he may at any moment determine to either. In certain emergencies, you cannot warrant him able either to command his own forces, nor to contain them. When he is at the top of his vigorous fettle, he will

fight tenaciously for self, for any well-grappled principle, for love; let his light be low, a child may cow him with a sneer. This because the power on which he relies, being human, is intermittent in its supply and capricious in its action. It is therefore not his servant as he fancies, but a very dangerous master; and is apt to turn upon him in the sight of others and put him to shame.

And the two perils are these two seeming contraries. Doting upon the conception he has formed of his own credit, he will disown the thing that cheapens it in common eyes, even though the thing be dear; conversely yet for the same reason, he will be quick to smite back when smitten in his pride of person, friends, or faith. The psychology is one. In either case he cannot bear to be despised; for all his assets lie in his own way and will and choice; and though he will fight for others to the death, he will fight for nothing save that its cause has merged into his own; thus his defence is self-defence, and his very bravery stands in fear of scorn.

This mixed defect in Peter, then, was the issue of one ruling passion, Pride. Not the pride of being in the right, for Peter was very docile when once he was made to see; not the pride of virtue, for one of his first words to Christ was a confession of sinfulness; nor the pride of conceited hardness, for a look could melt his tender heart; nor the pride of unforgiveness, for I am sure the sun would not have gone down upon his hottest choler "until seven times". He thought himself neither good nor great nor wise nor holy; only strong: and he

did not think much even about that—it was subconscious. He was just a joyous, affectionate, irresponsible child: "Let us build three Tabernacles"; "Lord, bid me come to Thee upon the water"—it is altogether a child's "Let me do it too"! But a child can be proud enough; and in the very childish impulses and ambitions of Peter we trace his confidence of strength.

Out of this complex of Pride, then, rose the double mind that was at once Forward and Fearful. On the one hand there was the impetuousness, the general tendency to self-assertion, so marked throughout the Gospels, but never directly snubbed by our Lord. There was the childish itch to dominate, to be first; which He did on many occasions, though for the most part by indirect reference, gently correct. There was the tendency to violent defence of persons and principles associated with his own love or credit; this led to one of his two crucial sins. There was the care for his rights, his reward—"What shall we have therefore?" There was even (as we infer from our Lord's general though pointed warnings) the hidden germ of oppressiveness, of overbearing assertion of authority or right.

On the other hand there was the inevitable correlative of all these things, which led him to his other crucial sin: the fear of men's faces, the shrinking from indignity and suffering, the abashed dissimulation before public opinion when expressed in ridicule or contempt; as when he rebuked his Lord's painful talk about dying. To this spirit in His Captain-elect our Lord constantly addressed veiled but almost

passionate exhortation to cross-bearing, suffering, and death for His Name.

In both these fruits of character, then, we trace the stem of Pride. For both are in the interest of Self: the one asserting it, the other shielding it: the one its exuberance, the other its shame.

CHAPTER X

Peter's Diagnosis and Treatment

"Simon, Simon . . . I besought for thee" L xxii 31, 32

Now our Lord would not let these two dangerous tendencies remain and develop in Peter; for their menace, to his destined work, was greater than the promise of his qualification. Brought into the world by a smiter or a renegade, the Church would have been stillborn. Yet what a task, to break and teach, by love, such an one! Nothing so helps us to realise the precious greatness there was in Peter, as the fact that Wisdom chose him with his flaws and deemed them worth the riveting.

We cannot wonder then that, from the first, Peter was our Lord's chief pre-occupation, His most anxious care. His explicit prominence in the story of the Ministry is but the outcrop of his implicit presence between the lines. When once we have grasped the real object of Peter's election, as revealed in his activities and conditioned by his weakness, we begin to realise what he cost his Master in moral guidance and vigilant concern. It becomes clear that his spiritual tragedy, by those who see no deeper than the mere letter of the Gospels, is less than half-known. Those who have demi-deified him are walkers on the surface, and err therein at that.

Read the plain word honestly and plainly, and you will read much more. You will discover that all the deeper light upon Peter lies in a region to which those who force its outer locks have no access : a plane of suggestion, association, key-words, *motifs* given out, veiled allusions, notes of reminiscence struck by common things. You will learn much more than respect for the cryptogram of St John. And you will, by slow degrees and at cost of much labour, really get to know something of the psychology, and even of the history, of St Peter ; whom you will find to have been a person infinitely more important, both in the mind of our Lord and to the very existence of His Church, than the poor compliment of Papalism represents him.

Of the long and laborious work of the Good Physician upon St Peter's soul I shall speak in some detail. Let me say at once that its whole objective was *to bring out Peter's malady at crisis*, that He might apply to it, before He left him to his work, that drastic remedy which was its only hope. In the meantime He was perfectly and even astonishingly gentle and forbearing with him ; for Peter's forward and often untoward ways were but the symptoms of his disease, which he could not help : and the Master was not concerned with symptoms, save for diagnosis ; His designs were upon the root of the evil ; and the time was not yet ripe, nor the means available.

For this operation He waited, wise Leech as He is, until the moment should be come ; cried for him to His Father—" I have prayed for thee "—what endless spiritual agonies do not those simple words

imply? watched him with unremitting care, treated him with subtle methods designed to bring his sickness safely to a head in time to coincide with His own destined Passion which alone could prove at once the assay and the cure of Peter's ailing soul.

This cure, well the Lord knew, could not be final. Peter's complete and enduring sanctification waited the gradual work of that interior Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. Jesus was a Physician, not a magician; He was not dreaming, in three years, to new-make a human soul. Be sure He neither guaranteed nor hoped that His patient, healed of his grievous wound, would never after feel it throbbing and troubling. Well He knew, and abundantly clear He made it both to Peter and to us, that Peter's final and permanent annealing could only be in the fire of a martyr's death—that instantaneous purgatory, the holocaust of a surrendered body and soul.

In his dispositions towards Peter and concerning Peter, He was even more pre-occupied with Peter's death than with his life. The final chapter of St John's Gospel was added to show that He carried His part-allayed anxiety to heaven; and the incident of Antioch is but the escarpment in a bed of hidden experience, justifying His concern. Only by "bearing his cross after" his Lord, only by "losing his life" could Peter "find it unto Life Eternal". Why else did the Lord specially decree that Peter should make the supreme sacrifice "before He should be come"?

Yet, while Peter's saintly perfecting could wait upon the issue, it was possible so far to ensure his

convalescence as to qualify him, given a special control and guidance of the Spirit, to carry to its goal the tremendous adventure for which his name and vocation sealed him. Accordingly what our Lord designed was to perform upon Peter's soul, before he should enter upon his arduous task, an operation which should at least defer any marked recrudescence of his weakness until the said task should be done.

And to render him accessible to this operation, it was essential that Peter should exhibit, at their full—and before the Lord suffered, for with Peter on His mind, He could not die—these two serious symptoms of his, the fever and the chill, which in source were really one : his violence and his fearfulness.

And these two outbreaks must happen in the same hour, bringing their submerged unity to light ; they must happen in full and merciless publicity, that Peter might drink to the dregs the salutary potion of shame ; and—masterpiece of homœopathy—the first must throw the second into pitiless relief, the second must react upon the first in absolving tears.

And so it was. In one night Peter at a servant's taunt denied the Master in whose defence he had just attempted a man's life with a sword. And St John has subtly pointed for us, between these two polar acts of Pride, the concealed relation. For the third Denial was called forth by "*a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off*" (xviii 26).

And his Lord's exodus to death was Peter's leisure to contemplate, through bitter tears, how brave

his bravery was, who in his Master's service hacked at a man's head and winced at a girl's tongue; and to wonder for the first time, whether the real jealousy that underlay alike such courage and such fear were not—just for Peter. Was ever Self, in all its history, so self-convicted, or Pride driven to such salutary suicide?

But we have not yet sounded the depths. The Lord's antidote for Peter is more than shame, and costlier even than repentance. Neither self-exposure, nor mortification, nor even the hottest tears, could by themselves avail to cauterise his wound. For it lay deeper and more interior than the scope of any moral lancet. This man's positive self-confidence, in common with all our mortal ailment, was the expression of a vital need; a negation in the spirit of the soul.

As with each one of us, so in Peter, the universal malady took a particular form; but in its inner seat and essence it was but the starved atrophy of all the human race; the life-hunger that could be revealed only by the coming of the Light Whose plans it hindered and by Whose Life alone it could be healed. The Pride, that bore the two untoward fruits of diffidence and confidence, itself sprang from a far more hidden root.

What was this canker; this more than canker, for it was sheerly death—of which neither Peter nor the world could have been convicted, save by the Life in whose dire need it stood? The Lord touched on it unerringly in the first and last angry word He ever uttered to him; angry, that he might never forget. For the moment after Peter's great

Confession (that *Credo* whose very love bore the bar-sinister of self-confidence) our Lord, laying upon him the Commission of the Rock and Keys, gave His first revelation of His coming Death; thus marking Peter's Charter, from the first instant, with the Cross. "Then Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him, saying 'Be it far from Thee, Lord—this shall never be unto Thee!' But Jesus turned, and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan; thou art a stumbling-block to Me; for thy spirit is not of God, but of men'".

This thing deep in Peter, then, unknown to him, so little apparent in his loving words: what was it? It was the spirit of the Tempter in the wilderness, who spoke for the race the mind of all the race. *It was the spirit of dislike to Sacrifice;* present in all flesh, strong in Peter; aversion from the only hope of remedy for man. It was the day-dream of an easy triumph, a short-cut round the suffering which was ever the price of all triumph worth the name, and which was soon to discover both its archetype and its apotheosis in Him Who was to die for the healing and empowering of Peter and all mankind. That spirit was, in Peter, the real root of the fruitful stem of Pride. And that suffering would be the only hope for Peter; and only through Peter's own suffering, the opening of his veins that the Very Blood might flow into them and perfuse him, will it work its cure; and never till Peter dies for his Lord the death his Lord shall shortly die for him to empower him so to die, shall that healing be more than partial, or that root-spirit of secure self-saving be cut out entire.

For, as Jesus went on to say " to His disciples " —and we know into whose individual eyes His gentle Eyes were looking — " Whosoever would save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it ". And " If any man would come after Me (a startling turn to the stern words just uttered, ' Get thee *after* Me, Satan ! ') let him ' deny ' himself, and take his cross, and follow Me ". And then " There be some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom "—" and He shall render to every man according to his doing " (Mtt xvi).

Who, after " denying " *Him*, was to " come after Him "—as Foundation of His Church ? Who *was* to " taste of death ", before He came ; who was to " take his cross ", yes, even be taken by it—and " follow Him " to His Kingdom ? Was it not Simon Peter ? And could his spiritual future be more eloquently forecast, than in this whole discourse : his need of Atonement, his lifelong need of suffering and death to be perfected therein ; his coming Denial ; his special " succession " to Jesus ; and, even so, the need of unremitting spiritual conflict all his whole life long (seeing that only death would approve his faithfulness) ; the very manner of his death foreshadowed, as more plainly in Jn xxi 18 ; the anxious warning of Judgment ?

Here are Peter and his Lord, then, entering upon their crisis together, because the Master's agony is to be the servant's life. And it need not interrupt our study of Peter's schooling if I remind the reader once more why we make it. It is in the interest of

our main theme. It is because that schooling is marked throughout, not solely with the promise of heroic achievement, but also with the foreboding of a lifelong survival of weakness. In Acts i–xii we have seen the former brilliantly fulfilled with no hint of failure—and followed by practical extinction, lighted only by two glimpses, one of which discovers him justifying only too well the misgivings of his Lord. From this our induction followed, that Peter's Petrine work was done; this threw a reflected light upon the nature and limitations of his Commission; whose terms, in so far as they are distinctive to Peter, we had already shown to be, in their scope and reference, confined to the inauguration of the Church.

Out of this finding arises naturally the question of the character and moral antecedents of St Peter. What can we gather of the man's nature from the Gospels? What was our Lord's attitude towards him? By what methods did He train him for his work? Why was this training survived by such complexity of soul, as could alternate strength with weakness and crown superb fidelity with backsliding? Is so anticlimactic a development to be found germinally folded in the Gospel beginnings? Above all, did Christ, the Omniscient, Who so deliberately elected Peter for his charge, let fall any indications of His knowledge that He was sending forth an agent capable of tergiversation?

It this last question be answered in the affirmative, then not only is our grave view of the act of Antioch —which no careful student of its conditions and bearings will call distortionate—confirmed and illus-

trated, but a flood of light is thrown upon our whole position with regard to St Peter's place in the Divine economy of the Church; and the way is opened for a deeper examination, with a view to some clue in the profound mystery of Peter's later life, of the Apostolic writings contemporary therewith. Hence this quest into Peter's moral origins, and his Master's part in them. How it fares, the reader will judge for himself.

CHAPTER XI

Peter's Crisis

"And he went out, and wept bitterly" L xxii 62

It is from the moment of his Commission to Peter, that our Lord begins that special breaking up of Peter's fallow soul, which is to prepare it for the reception of the seed of Calvary. The soul of his ailing is, that he is a stranger to Sacrifice; that he may discover passion he is to be drawn into his Lord's passion, and in the annealing fire of Atonement learn the need and the way, not to serve alone, but to die.

Jesus, with His great charge to Peter, enters upon a new and open revelation of His own coming Death. It is threefold; and each phase is bound up with a death-sign to Peter. The first, continuous with the Commission itself, has been already seen. The second, a week later, is the sign of the Transfiguration, with the discourse of "His Decease", associated with Peter's "sleep", and "waking", (L ix 31–33). The third, soon after, is followed by the profound though little-regarded Sign of the Stater in the Fish's Mouth, with its mystic inclusion of Peter with his Lord in a sign of Death and Resurrection, connected with the Atonement-Tax for the building of the Spiritual Temple, the Church (Mtt xvii 22–27;

see pp. 45, 66). In all these three there is warning about Peter's death; therefore, warning about his whole life; and warning implies contingency; and contingency, anxiety.

From this point to the crisis, warnings follow thick and fast. The Saviour's delicate charity knows how to wing, in the form of general exhortation, a personal shaft; and His arrows find their mark. So it was, be sure, with Peter. His twin faults are coupled together, because of their moral unity; of the two, the positive is oftener aimed at, because the negative is implicit in it; the forward and the smiter is apt to be the moral faintheart. Peter must have exhibited the former side of his nature more than we know; at any rate it was naked to the Eyes of Love.

When he asks his question about sevenfold pardon, he is answered with the parable of the Unforgiving Servant: a warning against oppression of his peers in ministry (Mtt xviii 21–35). When he boasts of his sacrifices and claims reward, he is told that all who suffer for Jesus (though, as the Petrine Mark adds, they will have "persecutions") will be rewarded, but that "many who are first shall be last, and the last first"; and the Parable of the Vineyard follows, with the same moral: a presage of his supersession by St Paul, so obvious and so striking that it were more honoured by condemnation as an *ex post facto* forgery than by the stupidity of oversight (Mtt xix 27–xx 16).

And when Peter enquires to whom the Parable of the Thief applied, He pointedly asks him "Who, then, is the faithful steward and the wise ——?"

and proceeds to warn him that to " strike the *men-servants* and the *maid-servants* "—especially in him to whom " much has been committed "—will be to incur punishment (L xii 41 ff); an arresting forecast both of Malchus and of the taunting maid, but reflected onward into Peter's later life by the mention of the Parousia. Oppression, exaction, roughness with his fellows in the ministry; these are tendencies we should never have surmised in Peter: but Christ " knew what was in man ".

Most significant, indeed, are the many warnings to Peter against the desire to be Chief. After the grasping request of Salome and her sons, Jesus calls " the Ten "—among whom, in the absence of James and John, none but Peter would have had colour for claiming the first place—and points out the difference between the kingdoms of the Gentiles and His own coming Kingdom, wherein " chiefness " is to consist only in the dignity of service and sacrifice like His own (Mtt xx 20 ff). (Can we refrain from thinking of a " Temporal Power "? good for government it may be, but not even germinally " of Him that calleth "; still claimed, with no less phlegm than before the documentary fate of the " Donation " of a Gentile Emperor.) In St Luke this warning is assigned (xxii 24–27) to the Last Supper, and placed between the two predictions of the betrayal by Judas and of Peter's Denial; which latter had been foreshadowed long since in the great Charge to the Apostles: " Whoso shall deny Me before men, shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God " (L xii 9).

All this manifold warning converges, drawing into

one prophetic ray, upon the night of Passion. In its light the double Petrine crisis stands out as a determination of moral tendencies foreknown and induced by Wisdom. But that crisis is not a screen absorbing the light. It is but a lens, which concentrates it upon the future. The light expands along Peter's life; for its point of search is Peter's death. After the Ascension, however, it becomes invisible light. The Lord's work stands in the credit of His agents, and His Name is honoured in them; but He keeps their spiritual confidence; and while Peter's creative exploits shine as the sun, the rays that follow his seclusion transcend the spectral limit of conventional sight.

The wise and patient student cultivates his intuition. The principle of foreshortened perspective, in Christ's oracles, is not hidden from him. Nothing is hidden, save from the careless and the profane. It is by the veil of mystery that God protects His sanctities; with the sympathy that can pierce parables the truth is safe from hurt. He that hath an ear, let him hear.

For it is not from those who see, but from the blind who "say, We see," that truth has aught to fear. The great Petrine error is the fate of men who find Christ's work with Peter consummated in Peter's tears; who close their Gospels on the picture of a human soul new-made to order in a day. A little psychology would help. Dazzled by the meteor-like career of the official Peter, it does not strike them to contrast it with the subterraneous night that follows. Unobservant of the problem, how should they find the key? It has escaped

them that the deep concern of Jesus, whenever He warns Peter, is for the after-time; will Peter "take the cross and follow after Him"; "lose his life for His sake"; be ready and "girt" at the Parousia: or will he be unwatchful, ambitious, jealous, oppressive, in that day of ministry and labour when He shall not be there to guide? They do not see that Christ foretold two Peters—one the triumphant agent of a foregone enterprise, the other the spiritual agonist against a recrudescent self.

Otherwise, they would have said, Here is successive evolution: the Rock first, the rocking-stone second; the πέτρα first, then the σκάνδαλον: the prime of valour first, then the wavering of older years; God's work insured, then the fight for man's soul; first, "On this Rock I will build", then "Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?" first, the "wise man who built his house upon the rock, and it fell not," —then "the foolish one who built upon the sand".

Then, apposing prophecy to history, they would have watched this succession unfolding; blaze extinguished in darkness; prowess shadowed in "dissimulation"; the master-builder replaced by the apprentice; the brief pæan of history suddenly hushed in a silence practically unbroken for twenty years, save by a note of supersession and the record of a fall; the honourable old age unstoried, the details of the noble death of the creator of Christendom left for fame to tradition's uncertain voice—whose most convincing claim, in this case, is to be faith's echo of the prophecy of Christ—and which undertones the martyr's very glory with a confirmation of his Master's last forebodings.

And, seeing all this, they would have distinguished the public Peter from the private Peter ; the upheld and inspired pioneer from the released and persecuted apostle ; perceiving the clean dichotomy of the twelfth chapter of the Acts, with its almost formal discharge, and its muted overture of spiritual peril, conflict, and death.

And finally, turning back to the Commission of Caesarea Philippi, they would have realised that it does not inaugurate an hereditary monarchy, nor even confer a personal office ; but enjoins an Act. Which course of very ordinary induction would have secured to the maker of God's Church an honour greater than any tiara—the honour of being understood.

To return to Peter's schooling. At length the destined time draws near, when the Cross—that Criterion of the world—shall bring Peter's case to light ; when the Physician, in lymph drawn from His own wound, shall inoculate him with death and life. The note is struck for Peter by his own mission, with John, to make ready the Sacrificial Feast whose bitter herbs were to prepare him for the lancet of Love. The scene after Supper (Jn xiii) is all Peter ; and in every phase he was to live with it to the end of his life.

And the first shock of his treatment brings his pride out, stark and plain. First of the Twelve (for that is the meaning of Jn xiii 6) his Master comes to him with a basin and a towel. He is to be publicly washed—by his kneeling Lord! Up he starts, aghast. The Christ wash his feet ? Then,

told that not else can he share the Kingdom, he veers right round—if washed he must be, let him be washed like a prince—hands and head!

Here is true Peter at last; both Peters, naked before them all; in training both for maid-servant and for Malchus; the Peter of the firelight and the Peter of the limelight—and neither Peter yet dreams that Peter is one—in Pride!

For most naïvely, in both these moods, Peter is deceiving himself. Honestly he thinks, in the first case, that he is concerned for the honour of his Lord; what really galls him is the indignity of being washed before his peers. Sincerely he believes, in the second case, that to him his Master's will is worth a martyrdom of shame; what he really wants is to win, through a conspicuous lowliness, his Princedom in the Kingdom. Subconscious? yes; but his pride is out—head and feet.

And—far more to the point—his pride's spiritual root. For it is precisely to be "washed", that is his only hope; and that, not by water, but by Blood: and before men, even as he loves to be before men. Thus his two extremes of mind towards the typic washing symptomatically betray at once his blind misprizing of the Blood and his vital need of it. So prone in spirit he lies, accessible at last to the scalpel of Love; whose working he "understands not now, but will come to know hereafter"; in fact, within a few hours; in effective experience, for many a distant day.

But there is a yet deeper mystery in the Maundy-treatment of Peter. I see the looming figure of Judas. Why does St John, whenever St Peter is

in question, always give Judas the full title, "Son of Simon Iscariot"? (vi 71, xii 4, xiii 2, 26). No Synoptist appends this designation to his name; and St John wrote when such details might be supposed to be known.

No one who has lived with the Fourth Gospel will deem the question trivial. The answer is that Judas, the "son" of another Simon, is the type of what this Simon's own spiritual "son" or product will be, apart from grace. For Judas was at once the cause of the Passion which both evoked and healed Peter's sin, and the foil of the warnings by which our Lord taught him. Judas son of Simon was Christ's scourge for Simon Peter's conscience; and Peter's "turning again" was to be the effect of Judas' dread example, even as his after-glory was to be the indirect fruit of Judas' sin and death; whereof Peter, be sure, was conscious with profoundest awe, when he recounted the dreadful tale of the Suicide, in so much detail, at the election of Matthias (A i 15–20). In this sense our Lord did not "lose" the "son of perdition". And the first sign of this wonderful dealing was immediately after Peter's passionate confession (Jn vi 68 ff), when the Lord turned on him with the words, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve—and one of you is a devil? Now He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot". But of whom, dear to His heart and plan, was He thinking?

It is this dark background which throws all the complex Petrine irony of the Maundy into grim relief. At the very opening of the scene the Judas-theme, with apparent irrelevance, is given out

(xiii 2): "Now during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Him, Jesus . . . riseth from supper"; and the closing note is the same—"For He knew who would betray Him; therefore said He, you are not all clean" (11). For it is the Lord's design *to materialise the half-formed villainy of Judas and the latent pride of Peter together;* and the one, like a counter-irritant, is to attack the other. The washing of the disciples' feet (for, having been "bathed" by the Word, they need only a partial and a local cleansing) is the typic purging of the nascent Church from Judas (after whose departure the Lord is "glorified") and the giving of the sop is the sacramental which brings out his sin.

And the particular point of Peter's washing is the purging-out of the Judas-principle, or potentiality, from his soul. For Peter's pride and Judas' avarice have one common root—selfish aversion from a Sacrifice which enables sacrifice; save that in the one case love still lives. "Every branch in Me which beareth not fruit, My Father taketh it away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit": these words, uttered a little later (xv 2) are the keys both to Judas and to Peter; and also to Peter of his own soul. If Jesus purge not this poison out of Peter, he "can have no part with Him". Let the one sin, then, inoculate the other; let Purgatory be kindled at the fire of Hell.

The only two disciples whose actions are foretold (John's future, in Jn xxi 22, is only suggested) are Judas and Peter. And it is a wonderful thought,

full of help and hope for those who stumble at the mystery of evil, that out of the corruption of Judas, like the honey out of the carcase, came the salvation of Peter's soul. Can we wonder that the first ministerial utterance of Peter was a shuddering description of the details of the Traitor's end ?

And so, by the hints of a coming "Betrayal", Peter's subconsciousness is allowed to be a little vaguely frightened. "Lord, who is it ?" Know he must ; and sets John asking. He had wondered over a similar hint before, thrown out in answer to his own outburst of devotion (vi 70) ; once, too, he had been called "Satan". Impatiently he solicits John ; the tiny, salutary fear has time to germinate. With the sign of the sop and the rising of Judas relief comes, deep and sure. But the thought has found a niche in his mind.

And while he wonders, comes the first Eucharist. "My Body, given ; My Blood, shed". There is no doubt, then, that this treachery of Judas is to bring the Lord to death. Under the Divine homœopathy Peter gets the Judas-disease in a mild form ; that he may be healed. The thought steals into his mind, that he must re-adjust his ideas. Plainly he is not, after all, the servant of a King marching to victory, but the votary of a losing cause. Ah, he will still be loyal ; more loyal than ever ! Only, things are not quite as he thought. And this Death, which he has so deprecated, is to be somehow died for them all—and for him ! and in some mysterious way it is to build them up and feed them.

But Peter has little time to brood. For now the Lord startles him by turning upon him directly,

with earnest reiteration of his name—his old name after the flesh: "Simon, Simon! see here! Satan asked to have you (all), that he might sift you like wheat. But I entreated for *thee*, that *thy* faith may not give out. And do thou—whenever thou hast turned again—establish thy brethren!" (L xxii 31, 32).

It appears, then, this Death is to be in some way a trial of loyalty for them all, Peter himself being marked for a special crisis. And apparently he will somehow be found wanting; for what else can be the meaning of "When thou hast turned again"? And "Consolidate thy brethren"; what great work is this that is destined for him? Well, one thing emerges. The Lord shall see that he will *not* fail. At the discovery of his barren apprenticeship, the subconscious possibility of something other than loyalty goads his loyalty into a passion. Not genuine, but sincere, he shouts his fealty: "Lord, I will lay down my life for Thee—I will go with Thee to prison and to death!"

And then the truth comes out. That very night, Peter will thrice deny his Friend's acquaintance before cock-crow.

Here then, for Peter, was the open truth about his soul; and in concrete form at last. He who had shuddered at the Atoning Death, has now sworn to share it; first, "Thou shalt never wash my feet"—then, "My hands and my head"; first, "Be it far from Thee, Lord"—then, "I will die with Thee!" first (in moral order) "I know not the Man"—then, Malchus' ear: and now he is told that his solicitude and his heroism alike are the lip-service of perfidy!

Yet one ray of comfort there is—but it glances, foreshortened, upon the future. "Thou shalt follow Me afterwards". The death that Peter so bravely invokes, he shall gloriously die; but not until the Death he knows not shall have taught him shame and sorrow. And never shall the lurking Judas quite go out from his great untempered heart, until its own life-streams shall be mingled with Atoning Blood.

But the time for Peter to understand these far perspectives is not yet; nor near. All that he is meant to take in for the moment is the fact of his own imminent self-discovery in frailty; and this only by a passing touch upon his consciousness. He is not to brood upon it; for it must not influence his will; the act of denial, which is to inoculate his soul, must be spontaneous; enough that, when the time comes, he may "remember the word which Jesus had said". Meanwhile, let him register, in a pain-softened heart retentive of impression, the long discourse which follows in the Cenacle and on the way from it (Jn xiv–xvii).

Addressed to them all, how vividly and personally, in the light of all we are learning, is it Peter's own! the heartening cheer with which it opens—"Let not your heart be troubled"—as though to salve the sore of the presage of Denial just before; the "many mansions" of ultimate reward; the "greater works" that shall be enabled by the Spirit and prayer; the warning to "keep His commandments", test of their love and condition of God's; above all, the Comforter Who should "bring all His words to their remembrance".

Then, on the way to Kidron, the warning to "abide in the Vine", and the purging of the fruitful branches; the coming "persecutions", the premium that will be set on their lives—"that you may remember, how I told you"; the "guidance" of the Spirit, and His declaration of "the things that are coming" (in John's Apocalypse); the ulterior "joy", the triumph of prayer. And, in the great Prayer (ch xvii), the petition that the Father may "keep them from the evil one" and "sanctify them", as He Himself has "guarded them—and not one of them has perished, but the son of perdition"; and the object of their "perfecting", that "the world may know that Thou didst send Me". For of what worth to God's glory should be the work of building, save it were cemented with the builders' blood?

Little of it all does Peter understand; it needs but that the words shall pass into his subconscious memory and be printed there. For the moment all is but a flashing panorama, a dim charted future in whose action, prime hope of a dying Captain's prayers, he sees himself. In all the confident perspective there is not one word of foreboding. But charge and prayer imply contingency; and contingency, responsibility. And the knowledge that must be branded upon Peter's soul, before it be tried in the Court of the High Priest, is just this: that he is responsible; and that upon his Captain he depends, not alone for the power to do His will in life and death, but for the faith that chooses it, and the love that suffers for it.

And now they are come to Gethsemane. The

final scene opens. Though in God's mysterious counsels it is written that Peter must be worse before he can be better, yet he shall not sin his sin without warning. The long strain of the heart-searchings in the Upper Room has exhausted the disciples ; the sleep in the Garden is made the type of spiritual unwatchfulness : " Simon, sleepest thou ? watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation ".

And Temptation was at the gate. The soldiers come—and the kiss of Judas and the elder twin of Peter's sins are born together. In the attack on Malchus the positive pole of his Pride stands self-declared. Its correlative followed quickly—and lo, all the poor crude soul has delivered itself into the hands of Christ—in time for the first cleansing springs of Calvary. " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

So the Searchlight of the Passion, with its first ray, has pierced a man ; so for the first time man sees, through the crystal of contrite tears, his own natural soul—and cries on Christ to save. Neither of Peter's sins was in itself morally grievous, when all is told ; they glare because they just definitely convict the natural man by the spiritual. The blow at Malchus was struck in part to vindicate his championship against the Lord's mistrust ; but there was love and courage in it too. At the seizure of Jesus outside Gethsemane the disciples had fled in panic ; but Peter had come back. True, he kept safe distance ; but he could not quite leave his Lord ; he came into the Court. The first maid's question suggested a negative answer ; seeing him come in with John, who went on and took his place

by the Lord's side, she said "You are not one too, are you?" and St Peter in momentary weakness gave her to understand as she supposed. In the ensuing denials he was just "falsely true" to a false step; the cursing was not to emphasise his renunciation of his Lord, but the vent of his mortification at the web he had woven for himself by his own folly, the reflex of nerves racked by shame and self-contempt.

Peter's nature was not evil, nor was his immediate need the bettering of it. What he needed was a new nature. Once that was his, the fruits of the natural man would in time fade and die; for the new sap would rise into the graft and heal it; "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet". That new nature could come only through Passion: initially through the Passion of his Lord; finally through his own, united therewith. And through his own bitter tears the Lord's Look—as he began to know himself—was new-making him even now.

And in this germinal redemption, rightly understood, we see Peter's future folded. The "natural man" could never have based the Church of God. But the planting of the new nature does not perfect a man. It is not a talisman, but a seed; and the tree needs much "digging about". Neither Good Friday nor Pentecost was to create an infallible Peter. By every word and detail, in every conceivable way, we are prepared for relapse.

How thus to read, if the Spirit teach, will in time appear. We shall later see, not only how ominous, in the reminiscent and allegoric sense, was every minute detail of this night for Peter's later future

and death ; but what elaborate measures were taken by the Spirit to ensure that what "he knew not then, he should come to understand afterwards" ; and indeed that he should never be allowed to forget a moment of it all to the day of his death. Of the necessity for such reminder, we ourselves need now no reminding ; nor of its bearing upon the alleged *jus divinum* of St Peter.

CHAPTER XII

Peter's Convalescence and Warning

"Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?" Jn xxi 15

And now we step out of the region of hints and half-lights, and come to open revelation. The awful ordeal is over, and Jesus, ere He leave His convalescent to the strenuous task that lies before him, binds up with tender hands the wounds that He has made. But the mien of the Physician, though He takes leave of His patient with confidence and loving hope, is grave.

For the risen Jesus, almost with His last breath on earth, plainly told St Peter that on the threshold of old age he would be crucified for Him, and implied that he would scarcely meet death with the enthusiasm of a martyr; and accompanied this announcement, not only with searching inquisitions and solemn warnings to be loyal to him both in life and death, but with hardly-concealed forebodings of severe temptation, a narrow if glorious victory, and a crown hard-won.

It is so customary to read in these oracles the verdict of an assured regeneration, the foregone flawless destiny of a ready-made paragon, that we have lost the sense of undertone. Yet the grave sad spirit of the narrative, the ominous minor key

of the whole action, should teach the serious student of St John a better sympathy with the reflected moods of Love.

For the scene is staged in a setting solemn and dramatic beyond precedent in the Gospels; the details which lead up to it, elaborate and long-drawn-out, and relevant only mystically, introduce St Peter in the rôle of a martyrdom narrowly attained; the background of the Dialogue is a deliberate reconstruction by the Lord of the scene of the Denial, publicly and in detail placing its painful memory on record; a threefold confession of "love" is pleaded for, a threefold protestation of "affection" accepted in default, a threefold renewal of the Commission imposed in rejoinder—and, with this last, the prediction of a martyrdom rather imposed than welcomed—and the urgent twice-impressed injunction to "Follow Me". And so important, for some reason, is the episode, that St John makes it the subject of an appendix to an already completed Gospel.

Now the fact, the occasion, and the detailed solemnity of this public harrowing of the deeply-penitent Peter, have to be accounted for. One might have thought his moment of weakness had been already pilloried out of all proportion either to its enormity or to its importance in the scheme of our salvation. It was expressly and publicly predicted by our Lord; and recorded at length and meticulously by all four Evangelists, who might conceivably have preferred to extenuate or suppress it.

But this final re-enactment, this inquisitorial

re-opening of a wound of shame and pain which a Look had dealt and Blood had healed through bitterest tears! True, in the act of exposing, our Lord absolves; true, a public re-instatement befits a public sin. Yet, by a penance so costly, Peter might well be "grieved"; for the Lord seems to doubt him still; and still His wistful Eyes, foreshortening all the perspective of his service, dwell upon his death.

And the reader too is left wondering. The chapter sets a painful finale to the last and grandest version of the story of our redemption; it is an anticlimax to the Resurrection-joy and glory, and seems to bring down the sun of the entire fourfold Evangel in a mist of tears and blood. Peter meets his cross before its time. Tingling in sympathy with him, we scarcely see his pardon for his punishment.

We must conclude, therefore, either that the Lord of love is less than kind; or that there underlies His action some purpose, hangs upon it some contingency, paramount for Peter and supremely vital to His plan. If it be mere recrimination, this is not the Jesus that we know. Obviously its main pointing is future; to avert some threatening disaster; and therefore entirely loving and divinely wise. And indeed our Lord makes this abundantly clear.

To it, then. Of course Peter is the theme of the chapter from the first. It is written round him. It opens with the note of the coming Apostolic Ministry, with its fruit of souls at the Parousia; there is the inauguration by Peter, who says "I go fishing", with the response from the rest, "We

also go with thee"; the catch of fish they bring to the Lord; the Feast of the Kingdom on the "shore" with Him. The whole object of this narrative is to introduce Peter as "covering his nakedness" at John's instance and leaping into the sea to reach the rest—a sign of his martyrdom before the Parousia, and of the "unwatchfulness" from which it would be his redemption; an acted rehearsal of the prophecy which crowns the scene in vv 18, 19; and, together with it, precisely justifying the story of *Quo Vadis*—and either verifying that story in substance, or pointing to an early and long-lost inkling of the cryptic methods of St John.

The "Re-construction of the Crime" opens on the shore. The first thing they see there is a "Fire of Charcoal" (ἀνθρακιάν). Only in one other place in the New Testament is the thing or the name found—in the story of the Denial (Jn xviii 18). Peter with a shock recalls what took place at that other "Fire of Charcoal". But yet not a word; perhaps only another Look; he is bidden merely to land the net. Denial and Apostolate! can he miss the connection? can he elude the mental frame into which it is his Lord's design to guide him?

Imagine what goes on in his heart during that breakfast with the Master and his friends. Sweet and calm is the scene, after the long night of fruitless toil; the rest on the warm shore, the ripples dancing in the morning sunshine, the great silvery heap of precious "numbered" fish gleaming, the meal all ready for them, their gracious risen Master, at once their Host and Guest at a meal of Eucharistic significance—to them, between love and hunger, a

sacramental banquet of delight, beyond the ken of kings! Never on earth were earth and heaven more sweetly met in mystic tryst of peace. And Peter? To him, this serene and simple love-feast—with its memories of another—what a foil for heart-searchings!

Something, he feels, is coming. Quick and sure it comes. The meal over, behold him on the rack of Love. Trine and public was his sin; trine and public shall his penance be; and his pardon. Addressing him by his old name, "Simon son of John" (in this Gospel used only here and in Jn i 42, as though calling him again from the natural birth into the spiritual) by three pitilessly-pressed questions the Lord tortures him into an agony of shame and repentance; but the threefold excruciation provides his threefold opportunity of vindicating his besmirched love.

In the Greek there is a climactic wistfulness in the questions, which the English loses. Twice Christ asks for the highest spiritual love (ἀγαπᾷς με;) and twice St Peter offers him a mere personal affection (φιλῶ σε). Then, the third time, He descends to the word Peter has used, and seems to ask "Do you give Me even 'affection'?" More still; first He asks, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" meaning, that Peter had professed a greater love than theirs; next, "Lovest thou Me"—as though to say "Do you love Me at all?" and the third time, "Are you even fond of Me?"[1] The wistfulness,

[1] The descending order seems to shadow forth the progressive gravity of the three great lapses, culminating in the (presumed) unreadiness at death.

the fainness to accept what is found, in default of much more that is hoped for, could not escape the dullest ear ; much less the intuition of those who have ever loved. It touches the pathetic :

> " O the little more, and how much it is—
> And the little less, and what worlds away ! "

Perhaps Peter would have liked to acknowledge the kind of love his Lord craved, but was shy of doing so, having learned what came of overmuch profession. Or it may be that he thought the Lord's word too cold, and proffered what he deemed the greater love. Or perhaps the Lord's word had an unfamiliar religious sound in his ears—he had heard it, in the Upper Room and after, applied nearly thirty times to the " love " between the Father and the Son, and to a human " love " which connoted utter sacrifice—and, misdoubting the range of the devotion he had lately so discredited, he preferred to claim no more than the personal affection he felt and understood. In any case, he left the Lord's heart hungry.

But Christ accepts our best. And He is more than patient. And the next step presses—the practical issue of the whole scene He has set. His departure draws near ; His plans must be completed. Before His death He had commissioned Peter to found His Church ; Peter, since then, had disgraced his trust ; contrite and pardoned, he must be reinstated. On the devotion, then, perfect or imperfect, which Peter has confessed, He proceeds to base his renewed Commission.

And this time with more particularity. Respec-

tively, upon the three answers to the catechism which for the purpose He has made threefold, He builds (in this His "third" risen manifestation, Jn xxi 14) three distinct commands, in which the action and the object in each case is different. We have already seen how He is indicating three successive phases of St Peter's activities as Establisher of the Church, as verified by history in the Acts (see pp. 62–64); three widening circles of incorporation, necessary before his distinctive function as Rock can be completed.

And now, this solemn Charter sealed—as though Jesus gave it with more confidence in the practical than in the spiritual Peter—bursts forth the great revelation: the prediction of the manner of his death: a glorious martyrdom indeed, but qualified by some mysterious condition of unreadiness. The sudden and emphatic announcement explains, not only the late catechism of searching conviction and serious challenge to faithfulness, but all that unremitting concern for Peter which through the whole Gospel story has run like a deepening lode.

It is of Peter's loyalty in *death*, more even than in life, that He has been thinking from the first: "Indeed, indeed I tell thee—when thou wast a younger man, thou wast wont to gird thyself, and walk whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be growing old, thou wilt stretch out thy hands, and another will gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not!"

No conventional orthodoxy could ever intimidate a plain man's sense of the implication in the last three words. They purport unwillingness—or at

'east unpreparedness, or at the very least initial unpreparedness—in Peter's encounter of his death. Certainly the "stretching-forth of the hands" (though not necessarily) suggests willingness; but "whither thou wouldest not" could never have been said of a Stephen. The whole prediction is shadowed with a vague but unmistakable sense of unreadiness; if not the coercion we associate with another Simon,[1] whom "they compelled to bear His cross".

And indeed, why should our Lord at all single out Peter, among so many future martyrs, for an announcement of his death by violence, if not to chasten unripe zeal (the first clause certainly reflects upon his youthful self-will), or to stimulate vigil, or hearten fearfulness—"when he should be growing old"? Why not the Jameses too? The announcement proves spiritual need; its terms—for which the "nakedness" and "girding" in the ship and the leaping into the water have prepared him—might stand for a prophecy of *Quo Vadis*. Safe enough was the glorious issue—for this was the death by which he was to "glorify God" (ver 19); but the glory is the outburst of a cloud.

St John the aged, looking back up the vista of the years, knew that Peter *had* glorified God in his death. And Jesus, as He spoke, looking into his heart as into an embryo, knew that he would. But God's foreknowledge precludes neither His concern for man, nor His care for him. Without entering upon a world-old and tiresome riddle, we know that whatever determinism there may be in God's order-

[1] Probably yet another object-lesson.

ing of man's affairs, it does not involve the control of his free will; and that His prescience means no abdication of His guidance. God's prevision and God's influence co-exist and consist in the fullest sense, though we know not how, with our endowment of volition and the contingency which it creates.

Hence "the concern of God" is a phrase consistent with sound theology; and, *a fortiori*, we can appeal both to the doctrine of the Kenosis and to the evidence of sacred history for "the anxiety of Jesus". And if this was ever manifested by Him, it was in this parting inquisition into Peter's heart—in view of the world-plan He was founding on him; this forecast of the dark night of a martyr's soul, to which, in a flash of remembrance, I think Peter owed his crown.

But Jesus was to be more explicit still. Peter was to have a nearer note of the time of his death than the mere "when thou shalt be growing old." After His last words, the Lord turned, as though to walk away, bidding him "follow Him." Perhaps He had in mind to tell, perhaps He did tell, Peter more in private. But the "following", always significant, was given a deeper tinge. For Peter, "following" his Lord, happened to turn round, and saw John "following" too. Naturally it struck him to ask what John's destiny was to be: "Lord—and this man—what of him?" Jesus, who did not at that moment wish even John to intrude upon their privacy, in recalling Peter's attention, let fall another revelation: "If I wish him to wait until I am coming, what is that to thee? Do thou follow Me!" The inner meaning is that Peter's concern must be

to "follow" Him in faithfulness of labour, life, and death; with the additional warning, that his martyrdom was to precede the Parousia, whereas John was to survive it.

This further announcement, which diverts the careless attention to John, is really a further monition to Peter. For the Lord had carefully and in detail taught them what would be the signs of His Coming; the inception of those signs, then, Peter was to understand, was to serve him as a signal for redoubled watchfulness. Among these signs (the last of which was to be the siege of Jerusalem and the Christian exodus therefrom) were to be the trials and executions of Christian leaders, and the spread of the Gospel over the Roman world (Mtt xxiv 9–14). By A.D. 64 these signs were in evidence; Christ's Name was set in the heart and capital of the Empire; indeed, with the very death of James, which had ushered in Peter's exodus twenty years before, the shadow of the End had fallen. Be the secret of Peter's last days what it may, he did not lack for warning.

And this final intimation, that he should die before the Lord "should be coming", we know that he never forgot. For, in the act of warning his hearers of the nearing Parousia, he expressed his intention of providing for the continuation of this warning after his own exodus, the Lord having "made it clear to him that it should be swift" (2 P i 12–15).[1]

Here St John's narrative ends. But he appends a note on the last words. They had, he says, been supposed to mean that he would not die. But

[1] Assuming the Petrinity of the Epistle (see p. 230).

Jesus had not said so. He had said " If I wish him to wait until I am coming ".

St John is writing towards the close of the century, for a generation to which the Neronian persecution and the Doom of Jerusalem—the " coming " to which the Lord alluded—were things of the past. In these events the Church of that day realised no more than does its modern posterity (a wonder indeed) the answer of history, in the phenomena of a world-crisis which had closed the Hebrew Dispensation, to the eschatological announcements of our Lord and His first agents. The cause of this myopia, then as ever since, was a crude and material interpretation of the mystic language of apocalypse ; its result, the continued expectation of things already fulfilled.

The exuberant Oriental imagery, under which Divine oracles were veiled from profane sight, secured the recognition of their fulfilments from all but those concerned. Thus that judicial period is taken to be yet future, which was really the overlap of an old age into a new ; and the pangs, in which Judaism died in giving birth to the Church, become the vaguely-distant death-throes of Christianity and the world. This error is mortal to the vision of God's secular scheme and to the credit of the Christian Religion, but not obstinate to a threefold antidote : a knowledge of the cryptogram of prophecy, some sympathy with the mind of Christ, and a little faith.

Hence St John's belated contemporaries, understanding the Parousia as involving the break-up of the universe—as many good people now understand it or piously believe that they do—naturally

assumed that it was still future ; and that, when it came, it would entail the instantaneous disappearance of St John. That he had survived it, and was living in its light (1 Jn ii 8) did not occur. To this misapprehension we owe his reserved and cautious comment at this place ; which was not intended to enlighten the uninitiate in the mysteries of apocalypse, but simple to remove an inconvenient impression that he was eternal. The alternative explanation is that he is still alive in his tomb—and that, if you put your ear to the ground, you can hear his heart beating. The reader must choose between the two. As surely as you can place every tessera of a mosaic when once you have the plan, so does a false synthesis breed a thousand absurdities.

Peter, then, is left with these final clues to the conditions under which victory is possible to him, these last incentives to watchful perseverance in his trust. Not only is he called to the crown of martyrdom ; but he must *always* keep vigil from the first, for there is one at least who will have a longer probation. And his hour will not be signalled to him by the final woes of Jerusalem ; for, by the time the Lord comes in those judgments, it will be over—for shame or glory. A few days since, he had been told " Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards " ; now was his time, in every sense, to " follow " ! And so, the Lord knew, he would ; but sometimes " afar off " !

For in this last section of the narrative there is a grave omen, which we must not shrink from seeing. The mention of " the Disciple whom Jesus loved " is introduced with a pointed reminiscence (quite

unnecessary as an identification, for in ver 7 he has been named without it) : " Who also leaned back on Jesus' breast at the Supper, and said ' Lord, who is he that betrayeth Thee ? ' "

This note gives us a wonderful glimpse into a moment of Peter's mental life. When, glancing round and seeing St John, he asked that impulsive question about him, on that instant a sudden memory flashed across his mind. Here was he, questioning the Lord about John—why, once John had questioned the Lord about *him !* Nay, questioned the Lord *about* him ? Surely, *for* him. Yet—was it so ? Was it not really " about " him—was it not because Peter had been afraid to ask the dread question for himself ?

It is a melancholy task, and one liable to misconstruction, to be thus pursuing the " shadow of Peter," rather than tracing the sainted foot-prints of his holy progress. Illustrious his honour and glory ; " his few faults shut up like dead flowerets ; the land has none left such as he ".

Yet perhaps the darkest of his " Fates " (albeit exorcised in the faithfulness with which he " glorified God ") lay in that name with which his discipleship ended and his apostolate began—the name of Judas.

SECTION B

The Provision for Lifelong Reminder

CHAPTER XIII

The Real "Three Denials"

"Before the cock crow twice" Mk xiv 30

Let us now pause, and leisurely glance back upon our tracks. We have seen that one of the chief cares of our Lord on earth was the cultivation of Simon Peter's soul; and that the objective of this care was the work by which Peter was to bring His redemptive plan to birth and being after Him, and the death by which he should glorify His Name. We have traced step by step the treatment by which He brought his Agent's weakness to light, informed it by the convicting and enabling power of His Passion, and finally left him with loving and yet stern warnings, both direct and associative, based upon the sin which had delivered it into His healing hands.

It will by now be clear that, in that last pregnant charge by the Sea, our Lord is not worrying over the denials in the High Priest's Court. They had not harmed His cause; they had only hurt a Heart which was deliberately attracting to itself all our griefs. They are past and forgiven; and, as such,

they have saved a soul and made it His. Without this painful inoculation He could never have left this man ripe for the infusion of the new Life of the Spirit. It is of the future that He is thinking; of the planting of His Church, for which He is making Peter responsible; of the death of Peter, in which His credit will stand. Indeed, His entire concern may be said to have been with Peter's planting and Peter's death. For observe—the scene of the "nakedness" and "girding" is no High Priest's Hall, but the "Ship"—the Church.

For—let him plant as well and firmly as he may—if death overtake him in that Thursday mood, if he slink from the scene a traitor to his Master-Builder, the Name of Christ will go down to the world an eternal bequest of shame. Who does not mock at a man who "begins to build, and is not able to finish?" Upon a Martyr must the Church be founded; not upon a renegade; upon a Rock, not upon sand, to fall before wind and flood. That was why He certified all Christendom beforehand, on His own best authority, of Peter's eventual loyalty in death; canonising His Martyr, as it were, by anticipation; in words so wonderfully framed that they should meet and answer their fulfilment both in shadow and light; that out of their prophetic contingency, historic certainty should emerge—after the event.

For He knew the yet untempered newness of the life He had set in the loving heart; and the amazing and laborious patience of His efforts with it are the surest proofs of the difficulty of His task. He peered down the perspective of the most momentous

decades of human history and focussed His vision upon an enterprise which one blunder might strangle in the birth—and, seeking among the sons of men, deliberately placed it in the hands of this brilliant grown-up child.

For Peter was that, though he was a genius too; a genius of energy, initiative, and courage, because a genius of love; more ideally fitted to the unprecedented adventure for which he was chosen—the launching of a cosmic spiritual revolution—than any man that ever was born. A profound mystic like St John would have lacked in broad-backed hardihood for this onslaught upon the world; but John's spiritual might was just Peter's lack. Peter's love, by his own admission, was the passion of a doting friend; not yet the consecration of the spirit to an interior Principle of Life. But no mortal man contains all; and it was among mortal men that Wisdom was fain to choose: and Cephas, in this special quest approved to be the highest common factor of mankind, was judged worth the risk of the "son of John".

And the personal training of the three years, so manifold and so intensive and yet so brief and so inchoative, was intended to be germinal; it could be left to the evolution of its own psychological law as need should arise. For every word and inflection, every look and gesture, every little commonplace scene in which He had set His gentle teaching, all these were being framed and strung as memories in Peter's heart. The man would become an Æolian harp, sport of the Spirit, self-resonant with Christ. How could pride's discord prevail?

I trust I may incur no presumption if I recall that, wonderful as it is to be a Rock, we are told how the seed which falls thereon has not much "deepness of earth" for roots; the result of which is "stumbling, when tribulation or persecution arises" (Mtt xiii 21). But St Luke (viii 6) tells us the secret of the trouble: it is "lack of moisture". Peter learned and was perfected, when he had shed enough tears. There is no saxifrage like Grace; and Rock moistened and broken may make the best soil in the world.

And we shall have seen, in reviewing Peter's character, how it foreshows the nature of his destined place in the Church. It is not the material of a pontifical sovereign, or of any kind of permanent ruler; it is the stuff of a rough-hewer, a spiritual Thor. *A priori* argument, in such a case, can be nothing more than circumstantial; yet it is cogent, being based on faith in Wisdom. This character is that of one called to an Act; not to an office. It is the character of a spiritual genius capable of a gigantic effort, the *magnum opus* of a lifetime; and nothing is more easy to conjecture, than a reaction to constitutional weakness *after the subsidence of the exaltation which had borne the work through.*

Glancing to the event, such a zenith as St Peter's is impermanent by its very nature. Original enterprise and sustained organisation, history tells us, are seldom found in combination: after a Moses is needed a Joshua, a David prepares and a Solomon builds, out of an Elijah's throes an Elisha brings to effect, an Ezra re-builds and a Nehemiah re-organises; and with most of such protagonists, before they

leave earth's stage, the weariness of spent effort presses upon nature's weakest spot. Is not the Gospel story of Peter a *leit motif* of his after-life: the three years' love and loyalty, the failure under trial, the love new-born from weakness at the last! God reaps and gathers His harvest before the autumn rains. The order of Peter's unfolding is written in the Gospels. Both shadow and light are boded there; and the shadow is but an interval in the light.

Where in his life, then, thinking forward, shall we surmise the shadow? Not in his splendid prime; for Christ said "On this Rock *I will build* My Church"; that Planting is the destined will of God, and no flaw in human instrument shall be suffered to mar it; "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not". Nor in the last act (be the penultimate what it may) of his aged will; for it is written that "in death he should glorify God". In what period of his life, then, shall he "begin to sink"—"gird his coat" of watchfulness to him, being found "naked"?

Surely in the latter time, the afternoon and evening of his days, when the great work should be safely done, Jerusalem squarely founded in the earth; when, having well and truly "planted his brethren", his declining forces, conscious no longer of the uplifting *numen* of election, would the likelier flinch before the desperate tactics of him who "had asked to have them all, that he might sift them as wheat". For God is wise and mighty to get His will of us in season; our decline comes often when His end with us is attained: if then His vessel break under His

hands, His love and justice can be trusted ; He can " re-mould it nearer to the Heart's desire ".

Now I have already pleaded (pp. 103–106) that we should take a larger view of St Peter's " Three Denials ", and one more worthy of the dignity both of proportion and of prophetic perspective, than is commonly received. Upon the seemingly-small detail of their " threeness " (seeing that they are practically but one act) there is a strange insistence. All four Evangelists carefully record our Lord's prediction of that number of Denials, and its detailed fulfilment ; and in Jn xxi the number is implicit.

Observe that the number three is the mark of Peter. Thrice he is called ; thrice (we find by collation) he protests his loyalty, thrice is warned of his coming threefold Denial ; thrice, at our Lord's third risen manifestation, he is probed for love, thrice re-commissioned. Thrice, in episodes of " fishing " in the Sea, is he the central figure ; thrice he heads three disciples who are with the Lord privately ; would make, at the Transfiguration, " three tabernacles " ; thrice he slept in Gethsemane ; thrice was he made to enact his own death. In three stages he founded the Church, thrice called down the Holy Ghost, wrought three great miracles, was " sought by three men ", told thrice the story of the vessel thrice let down ; thrice was he in prison ; by three utterances of his " Angel " (who thrice intervened for him, A v 19, x 3, xii 7) he was typically discharged from his trust ; and into three parts his whole life falls—his Gospel pupillage, the work of his Commission, and the unstoried sequel.

Much more than appears is here. If Peter's threefold defection was really, as were most of his acts and experiences, typical of his future, we should expect to find, in the great cases at least, the number answered to. With Maundy Thursday and Antioch, then, "Quo Vadis" completes the three. Assuming, that is, the truth of Quo Vadis. The reader knows well that I do not assert it. I do not need it- for my main contention ; the case for which was complete in Part I. But he will by this time realise that there are considerable reasons for crediting "Quo Vadis", at least to the extent of some penultimate defection at Peter's death. Externally, as we have seen, its unfavourableness to St Peter is favourable to its claim. Internally, it strikingly sets seal to a mass of hidden omen concerning Peter's end.

I repeat that I am neither profanely venting any *odium theologicum* upon a holy Saint whose whole life is the strongest unconscious (?) protest against the things done in his name, nor going down into the Egypt of tradition in quest of reinforcements for straightforward and completed argument. I do but ask attention to the following coincidences—to call them no more :

1. From the Gospels we intuitively suspect that St Peter's recorded Threefold Denial was at once the type, and the first, of three notable acts of defection from loyalty ; the two last of which were to follow as incidents of his apostolic career.

2. The last of these two remaining acts, we are led to believe, would be in connexion with his death.

3. Our anticipation of two such acts is met and

confirmed by evidence of their occurrence. The second is recorded by inspired history. The third is alleged by a tradition early enough to be venerable and late enough to be recommended by its contrast with a wide-spread cultus of St Peter.

4. The occasion to which this last act is assigned is the occasion of St Peter's death.

I suggest that presage and event here mutually confirm each other. If it be so, we get a light on Peter's apostolic life, whose illustrative bearing upon Peter's charter we already know. A clean dichotomy falls—and gives us something very like two Peters: the former, the much-bruited hero of a decade of sustained and pre-eminent faithfulness; the latter, a superseded obscurity—of whom the most we know is that his night (though we credit it with faithful labour and a martyr's crown) began and ended with a flight from the reproach of Christ.

Having already reached the conviction, then, that he had been commissioned to build and to plant; and having recognised, in his first and public labour, a pure and simple act of building and planting, progressive and complete: we have, upon this original demonstration, at once a corollary and a commentary. For it is of the nature of truth, once grasped, to provide clues to its own illustration. Had we turned Christ's words upside down and misread Peter as Head of the Church, we should never have read Peter's spiritual cryptogram in Peter's beginnings; now, knowing the soul of Peter, we can trace the whole Petrine scheme in the order of its unfolding.

This vision is of value to those who are neither

intimidated by a falsehood because it is ancient, nor hypnotised by it because it is organic. Their eyes will be opened to a new synopsis of the truth—and in its light they will turn slowly and contemplate the error with a new wonder, even a sort of respect. In the power and prevalence of the Roman Catholic conception—*the elevation of a series of Foundations over the top of a building*—they will recognise the most masterly exploitation of the herd-instinct known to the history of human thought.

CHAPTER XIV

The Death-Omens of the Lake-Signs

"He began to sink" Mtt xiv 30

We have now gone far enough in our study of St Peter's spiritual career to suspect that, in those records of Christian origins which are practically our sole source of information about him, he has a very considerable underworld of his own. We have delved from time to time into this subliminal region and brought up treasures of association and suggestion which have guided our surface explorations and confirmed our directivity. Using the divining-rod of intuition, we have lighted on the water of life and the gold of truth.

Let us now descend into this hollow of the Rock, this Petrine subconsciousness of Scripture, and explore for their own sake its caverns and galleries, its veins and streams. Let us see if we can collate into some kind of system or order these covert hints and allusions, these underlinings of presage and reminder, which accustom us in every Petrine context to lift words and phrases and peer beneath them—and often startle us with a sense of Peter's presence where Peter is not named.

The "Fates of Peter" are not ecclesiastically discerned. For those who honour Peter with unprejudiced scrutiny, their secret sign is upon his

whole personality. I see over his noble figure, from his call to his "exodus" and far beyond it—a cloud, not only of death, but of temptation; and it is always pathetic and ominous. Brief, and almost wholly unclouded, is his Petrine work; otherwise, this "Shadow of Peter passing" overhangs him always. From all the Lord's monitory dealings with him there spring, and pervade his whole life, dark lines of recurrent shadow.

For, in things interior, he was inclined to forget; had he not, when he denied, forgotten the warning of Denial? Therefore must his memory be branded with small, vivid, material things, that through all his life, at every extreme moment of the temptation and trial for which the Enemy should so specially mark him, it might be recorded in his consciousness that he "remembered the word which the Lord Jesus had said". At each dangerous turning-point the sensing of some tiny detail, some incidental aspect or angle of things, shall safeguard or redeem his present by linking it with the past and the future. His every action and passion tells his fortune spiritually. His destinies, in auspice or irony, shape themselves around him as he moves. There never was a figure so haunted. As by an unseen, muted orchestra, when he walks upon the scene, his serious *motifs* are given out.

Such a method may seem finical or mechanical. Is it? How else does the Spirit train any of us, but by signing our souls, as we grow up in the school of experience, with a few simple, insistent ideas? How else does our inner consciousness get to *know* anything of the parallels between which we are set,

of the part in Life we are called to fill, but by a few indelible mental pictures, a little family of associations growing up about us, arraying common things with warning and promise, and so building up our duteous knowledge of the will of God?

As an introduction to these cryptic methods of the Spirit, let us begin with Peter's three great experiences in connexion with the Sea of Galilee. It must first be realised that this skull-shaped Lake, in our Lord's mystic teaching, represented Death. It was His method to use it as an object-lesson of His coming victory over Death; opening His Ministry by "walking along its shores" and as it were laying siege to it, as He proclaimed His Kingdom of Life; continually "crossing-over it" (signing it with His cross); "walking upon it", as a trampling Victor; stilling its storms; riding upon its bosom, as upon a conquered enemy, as He "taught the people out of the ship"; and causing fish to be drawn up out of its depths, as representing souls raised from spiritual and moral death.

This symbolism, by Water, of Death in its broadest aspect, is one of the oldest animistic conceptions of humanity. Of the evil force that is fatal to man, the raging sea was the first type. The thought underlies the Creation-story and the story of the Flood; crops up in Jonah; takes homœopathic form in Baptism and the Fishes of the Catacombs; and closes Revelation with the mystic promise, "There shall be no more Sea".

Now "Galilee of the nations", "toward the Sea, in the region and shadow of Death" (Mtt iv 15, 16, from Is ix 1, 2) was the scene of the Ministry, and

represented the world under the dominion of Death. And in the first lesson of this "Sea", Peter is the central figure. The Sign of the first Draught of Fishes is a parable of the Kingdom, and proposes the mission of Peter and the rest. The allegory may be tabulated thus. It will serve as an exercise in mystical interpretation.

L v 1–11

Narrative	*Meaning*
They have left the boats, and are washing and mending their nets	They are already John's disciples to repentance
Christ enters Simon's boat	Peter is to be the Pioneer, and Apostle of the Circumcision
He bids him "put out a little from the land"	Christ's own Jewish ministry, confined to Palestine
Christ sits and teaches from the boat	Riding on His doomed enemy, Sin-Death, He proclaims Life
"And when He had left speaking"	When His Ministry was over,
He bade Simon "Put out into the deep, and let down for a draught"	Peter was to found the World-Church
Peter says, "We have toiled all night and taken nothing"	The Fruitless Old Dispensation

The Great Draught	The great first harvest of the Church
The breaking nets (and escaping fish)	Increasing need of labourers; persecution; schism; falling-away
They beckon to their partners in the other boat	The call of the Pauline (Gentile) ministry
Both boats begin to sink	Woes of Jerusalem and Neronian Persecution
The nets are brought to shore	The Parousia[1]

In this Sign we have as yet little that is personal to Peter, beyond his introduction as the Foundation-designate of the Church. It is rather an acted announcement, at the outset of His ministry, of our Lord's whole programme. It leads, however, to that initial confession of sinfulness, which at once determines Peter's possibilities and imperfections as an instrument, and places him in the sphere of the Lord's redeeming love: "Depart from me—for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" No spiritual height is impossible to one who can be humbled by the sense of wonder. Yet in "Depart from me" Peter lays bare in three unconscious words the essential malady that craves the leechcraft of his Lord; the spirit which, at the three years' close, broke forth in "Be it far from Thee!" With all humanity, Peter needs, not the Lord's "departure", but His touch. For man's making and enabling, God and man must

[1] And establishment of the Kingdom in the Unseen. See p. 32. (I cannot "Edit" the N.T. eschatology.)

both be wounded - and the soul cleansed and fed with Blood.

Peter's next Sea-lesson, a far more personal one, is an exercise in the perception of this need; and a foreshadowing of its last and gravest extremity. It is given him, not as a riddle to be precociously guessed, but as a sign to be stored in the inner chambers of his memory, against the day of the Lord's last revelation by that same Sea—when he will remember, and understand.

Mtt xiv 23–33

They are rowing hard against a contrary wind	The toiling, persecuted Church
It is " the Fourth Watch of the Night "	The " Last Hour " of the Apostolic Age (see pp. 104–106)
Jesus " comes " to them, walking on the water	The approaching Parousia of the Conqueror of Death
Peter says, " Lord, bid me come to Thee upon the waters ; " Jesus says, " Come "	Peter, in his best heart, aspires at martyrdom ; the opportunity is to be given him before Jesus " comes " (John is to " tarry until He is coming ")
He walks towards Jesus upon the water	His zeal and faithfulness
" When he saw the wind, he began to sink "	Later weakness under persecution

Jesus raises him	He conquers through special help (the Quo Vadis vision ?) and dies for Christ
The wind ceases, and they reach land	Rest in the Kingdom

With this Sign we may compare that of the Storm-Stilling, where, though Peter is not named, we may presume that the boat was his. The Sign, as will be obvious, is a commentary on Jn xxi 18–22. Peter is to " walk upon the Sea "—to base the Church well against death, in the spirit of his Master ; he is also to " come to Jesus " before Jesus " comes " to the Church. But, between the two, there is to be a narrow escape from " sinking " ; and it is to be a matter of " little faith ".

And when at length we come to that last revelation to Peter, we find that it is ushered in by a third Sea-drama ; which, combining and transcending the features of the two last, is intended to set Peter's mind in the train of their joint remembrance. It is the most personal, the most clearly-focussed, of all.

Jn xxi 3–14

Peter says, " I go fishing " ; the rest say, " We also go with thee "	Peter, first among his peers, bases the Church
Jesus, as yet unrecognised, appears on the Shore in the Dawn	The approaching, unrealised Parousia

The Great Draught of great numbered Fishes, from the "right side" of the ship	The late harvest of Neronian martyrs
John warns Peter that "It is the Lord"	Peter is warned, by the Apocalypse, to watch for the Parousia (see my ch. xix)
But Peter is "naked" (clad only in his undergarment)	Peter's vigilance lapses when death threatens
Yet he "girds his coat about him, and casts himself into the Sea"	He conquers temptation, and rushes to martyrdom
The others come to land in a small boat, dragging the net	John (and others) "tarry" till the Parousia
Peter, already with Jesus, is bidden to land the net	The mystery of the Lord's Coming "with His Saints" to gather in His own (see 1 Th iii 13, Mtt xix 28, 1 Cor vi 2, Rev xix 14) in which Peter, we may believe, should have a special share
The Meal on the Shore	The Feast in the Kingdom

The mention that "the net was not broken" (Jn xxi 11) directs us to compare this Sign with the early one of L v 1–11. Doing so, we find that, in finality and triumphant completeness, it transcends that other throughout. That Sign was wrought at the beginning of our Lord's ministry, this at the end. There, there were two ships, here, only one; there, Jesus was in the ship, here, He is on the Shore. There, the nets are let down anywhere, as though good and bad fish alike were to be taken; here, "on the right side", the side of good omen. There, the net is Peter's, and is let down by him; here, he is not initially distinguished. There, the fishes are "a great multitude"; here, the number is specified. There, the net broke; here, there is no schism, for "the nets were not broken". There, they are brought into the tossing ship; here, they are drawn to the Shore. There, the ships begin to sink; not so here. There, Peter is prominent only as owner and First Fisherman; here, in the girding and leaping, he stands out only as drawing near to his death. And this, the whole point of the Sign, is strongly emphasised; for whereas, in the other Sign of Mtt xiv 24–33, he only "walks upon the water" to come to Jesus, here he "leaps into" it.

From all this we gather that the three Signs are, in their time-relation, progressive. The first foreshows the opening of the Church by Peter, the End being briefly foreshortened; the second and third are progressively-deepening shadows of his martyrdom -the third marking the close of the Apostolic age, when "out of the Great Tribulation" the coming Lord should reap the first-fruits of His Church.

That any commentator should overlook the consistent Petrine purport of these acted prophecies is matter for much wonderment. Peter, I warrant, did not. But they were "written for our learning"; and when a teaching body claims, in Peter's name, to bind us with Peter's chains, we should naturally like some light thrown on him. Considering the exegetic shifts and editings to which Peter's votaries are driven by the lack of any plain countenance in Scripture for their cause, it is hard to think that data of such significance can be irrelevant to it. Do they claim them in its support? or, if otherwise, can they explain them?

We are at present urging them as an important part of a mass of evidence pointing the other way. Yet so far as we have attended the school of the "Successor of St Peter, Vicar of Christ, and Doctor and Teacher of all the faithful", we have not heard them taken into account. Can anyone snatch us from the brink of a somewhat invidious conclusion?

The key to these three Sea-mysteries is the obscure little Sign of the Stater, in Mtt xvii 24–27; which, for wisdom essenced in words, may be called the Spirit's masterpiece. Though I have already sketched its meaning (see pp. 45, 46) let us note that the "Fish that first came up" (compare the single Fish on the "Fire of Coals", Jn xxi 9) denoted the Lord Himself, First fruits from the sea of Death. The Coin in its "Mouth"—which was in value twice the "Atonement-Tax" due from each Jew for the upkeep of the Temple—was the Atonement paid by Him, the "Word" from the Mouth of the Father, as the price

of the new Temple of souls, which Peter was to found. This coin He directed Peter to pay "for Me and thee". Thus He mystically bound up Peter with Himself in a Sign of Death; in other words, He warned him that he would be called upon to die for Him, and, for the power to do so, pointed him to His own Death. Which Death and Resurrection He had foretold immediately before the miracle took place (vv 22, 23).

Did the Apostle understand all this? I am sure he did not. Not until the need of it arose. Many years after, and, it may be, often, he was glad that he had committed the words of Christ to memory. Enough that, in the hour of need and strait, the Spirit should interpret.

CHAPTER XV

The Fates that Haunt Peter

"A man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in"
Job iii 33

So not once nor twice, that God may have a witness in his memory, Peter rehearses, as though by a subconscious self-knowledge, the contingent issues of his life and death. Such reflexes involve no determinism, either of Peter's will or of the circumstances which should be the sphere of its free choice. A man's intuition may read him, far into the future, the main lines of his moral evolution ; their direction is given to some degree in his moral history. Such prescience lies beneath the threshold ; yet it may subtly pull the strings of his will and influence him to mould his actions, again and again, on the destiny of his character.

We cannot tell how often we thus stage, in trivial scenes and groupings, our own future. Few will deny that men sometimes do and suffer things, which long after they recall and name them warnings ; and so they are : but God often lets us warn ourselves, for His laws are written in our hearts ; what wonder then if we enact unconsciously, as in a waking dream, our own judgment ?

Let us now collate the most marked of those commonplace associations in thought and state and action,

which we have called St Peter's Fates. Gathering one by one around him from his earliest connexion with our Lord, they thicken slowly into the dark cloud of omen by the Lake, which materialises in the farewell announcement of his death. With the Pentecostal dawn the mist vanishes in brightness, and no spiritual shadow troubles the record of those illustrious activities, by which the Rock fulfils his charter and his name. But as the great work draws to its last and greatest phase, faintly the dusk is felt creeping up once more, the shadows glide and lengthen, until in the mysterious night-scene of the "Discharge" Peter seems to go out from our ken into a haunted darkness—so dense that henceforth we might despair of his spiritual fate, were we not prevented by the prescience of his Master's implicit faith in him.

How, through that darkness, his Fates pursue him still; how, emerging into contrast with the darkness, they become faint gleams by which we can still trace the sharpened warfare of a soul exposed by reaction; and who, as Mentor of that soul, was entrusted with their marshalling: we shall in due time see.

And all these signs and associations, these Fates of Peter, have their radial focus in the Night of Passion, when in the tense and memorable crisis of his life he learned in anguish his ailing and its Remedy. From this central point, like nerves from a ganglion, they stream out either way—back into his pupillage, forward into his future. They come to birth before their time, and to resurrection after it; they predispose him to his assaying, and recall him to his

purging. It is a wonderful study of the patient craftsmanship of Christ, as He forges the roughest of human material into an instrument for the most tremendous oppugnation ever visited upon any world.

At the same time it is a type of the unsuspected narrowness of the parallels within which all our lives, small and great, are set and pointed to their several ends. There are those of us who have known, like Peter, at least some one vital crisis of love and penitence, of bitter learning and intense resolve, of trial, shame, and purgatorial tears. Long afterwards, at certain pregnant moments and not once nor twice, little memories of that time have fanned us like fleeting odours—things so small, it may be, as some sound from the street, the pattern of the paper on the wall—and in the tiny ghost of remembrance, as it vanished, has been revealed the Spirit, pleading with the will.

How many of those strange sudden stirrings of consciousness, when memory has whispered through its own forgetting, "I have been here before," may not be the subliminal echoes of that central experience of life? And at last it comes to us to recognise, in that crisis, the supreme impressing of some one lesson which life is designed to teach us; the pointing of some single narrow path of doing or renouncing, along which alone we can reach our destined goal.

And thus, recognising how important was our "Passion-Night", our eyes are opened to the understanding of much that went before it. We perceive that, as it still sheds its broken shadows about us,

so its glooms were gathering before it fell; that some strange and many common things, that befell us in the older time, were but experiments of evolution, waves of destiny bringing in that single flood-tide of a lifetime, whereon if a man embark not, he may fail for ever. What was that definite, that simple lesson? Have we learned it? Will life never give us respite from its descanting, its manifold reiterancy?

Of this discipline, Peter is a monument. In him it is highly set in evidence, and seen in being. Yet it is nothing more than may be known to every one of us, who shall have watched his own life. As with Peter while he lived, so with us, these little Signs are our secret with Christ.

I subjoin a collation of the Fates[1] of Peter. All will be found to culminate in, or depend from, the night of Maundy Thursday.

The Sign of Three. For the ubiquity of this mark of Denial, see p. 176.

Sleep. Twice in the Gospels, and twice in the Acts, Peter "sleeps"—the type of unwatchfulness: at the Transfiguration "Peter and they that were with him were weighed down with sleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw His Glory"; and thrice (with the others) he sleeps in Gethsemane, before the Lord "came" and said "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch one hour? watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation". Again, seemingly thrice, he sleeps upon the housetop when the men come from Cornelius; and yet once more in the prison before his "departure" (A xii 6).

[1] Read again, in this connexion, my pp. 44–48.

The Maidservant. The Greek word for the "damsel" to whom Peter made his first and second Denials is παιδίσκη. Thrice elsewhere—once before and twice after that night—we find her, under this name, dogging Peter. In the Petrine Parable (L xii 45) Jesus says, "If that servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His Coming; and shall begin to strike the men-servants and the *maid-servants*" (παιδίσκας). Again, in the "Departure" scene, "a damsel (παιδίσκη) came to hearken, called Rhoda" (A xii 13). Yet a third time, and we get the key: in Gal iv 22 St Paul explains who the real παιδίσκη is; it is the "Bondwoman", Judaism. It was out of deference to this spiritual "Maid-servant" that St Peter (as related in this same Epistle) had in act denied the freedom he had himself given to the Gentiles (Gal ii 11).

No student who has outgrown the credulity of superficial judgment will deem this reiteration of the word a coincidence. For the act at Antioch, what is it but the Second of St Peter's real "Three Denials"? The Gospel Denial involved three acts, as we have seen, because it was the type, and itself the first, of Three; and by whom were the two first of those acts called forth, but by a "Maidservant"?

The Door-Keeper. The allegory of the Maidservant is wonderfully carried out. For she of that Thursday night was, so St John twice tells us, "the Door-Keeper" (θυρωρός) who admitted Peter into the Court (xviii 16, 17). Again, the Maidservant Rhoda was a "Door-Keeper" too; for she came when Peter knocked "at the door of the gate" (A xii 13).

But St Peter was himself to be the "Door-Keeper",

who with his Keys should open the Church ; under that name he is covertly alluded to in two Parables (Mk xiii 34, Jn x 3).

And what of the third "Maidservant", the "Bond-woman", Judaism? Was she not, in the worst sense, a "Door-Keeper" too? a rival Door-Keeper ; for did she not, through Peter, close again the Door of the Gentiles which Peter himself had opened?

Doors and Gates. It is therefore natural to find Peter constantly associated with these. St John, at much length and pains, describes how he was "standing at the Door without" the Court, and was admitted by the Door-Keeper (xviii 16) ; and SS Mtt and Mk tell us that before his second denial he "went out into the Porch". The "Gates of Hades" were not to prevail against the Church founded on Peter. It was "at the Door of the Temple" that he healed the lame man (A iii 2) ; he told Sapphira that men were "at the Door" who would bury her (v 9) ; the messengers of Cornelius "stood before his Gate" (x 17) ; twice he is in prison and the "Doors are opened by an Angel" (v 19, 23, xii 6) ; and seven times, in his "Exodus" chapter, the "Doors and Gates" of the prison and of Rhoda's house are named (xii).

Following. Offering to "follow" his Lord to death, Peter was told that he could not "follow" Him now, but should "follow" Him afterwards ; and that night he "followed" Him to the Court, "afar off" (Jn xiii 36, xviii 15, L xxii 54). This recalls to us that his first act was to "follow" our Lord (Mtt iv 20) ; that, on rebuking Him concerning His Death, he was told that he must "take his cross

and 'follow' Him" (Mk viii 32–34); and that he boasted of having "followed" Him (Mk x 28). By the Lake, after the Resurrection, we have the meaning word-play of the twice-repeated "Follow Me", with John's "Following" interposed (Jn xxi 19–22). In the Race to the Tomb, "Simon Peter cometh, 'following' after John" (Jn xx 6). Finally, in the Exodus-chapter, his Angel bids him, as had his Lord, "Follow me" and he "went out, and followed him" (A xii 8, 9). In all this "Following" we have the double sense of succession and martyrdom.

Going Out (in the senses of wrong-doing, of repentance, of discharge, and of death). Peter "went out" into the Porch before his second denial, and afterwards "went out and wept" (Mtt xxvi 71, 75). When Judas "went out", it was a warning for Peter. In the Parable in answer to his question about forgiveness, the servant "went out" and oppressed his fellow (Mtt xviii 28). From Joppa he "went out" to convert Cornelius (A x 23). In the Exodus-chapter, Peter "went out" thrice: twice from prison, and finally "to another place" (A xii 9, 10, 17). And in 2 P i 15 he speaks of his death as his "Exodus"—and proceeds to speak of the Transfiguration; wherein the Three upon the mountain had talked of the Lord's "Exodus" (L ix 31).

Turning. For Peter this means repentance. At the Last Supper: "When once thou hast 'turned'"; and after the denial, "The Lord 'turned', and looked upon Peter" (L xxii 32, 61). So, in a Petrine context, being asked "who was greatest", Jesus said "Except ye 'turn', and become as little

children——" (Mtt xviii 3); and, after the Commission and Rebuke, "Jesus 'turned', and said to Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan" (Mtt xvi 23). And the retrospect in Jn xxi 20—"Peter, 'turning,' seeth the disciple following".

Beating and Smiting (the tendency to violence). The warning against "beating the men-servants and the *maidservants*", which combines the attack on Malchus with the Denial (L xii 45). The two "Smitings" in the Exodus-chapter: "an Angel of the Lord smote Peter on the side", A xii 7; and "an Angel of the Lord smote Herod", that his pride of pomp might warn[1] Peter and Peter's *cultores* (23).

Cockcrowing. For the eschatological meaning, see p. 104. *Nakedness and Girding* (for Peter, unwatchfulness and self-recall). The association dawns slowly. Just before the Petrine Parable, Jesus says "Let your loins be 'girded' . . . those whom the Lord shall find watching, He shall 'gird Himself' . . . and serve them" (L xii 35, 37). Again, in a context highly suggestive of Peter, "Gird thyself, and serve Me" (L xvii 8). In retrospect upon the Denial, Peter, "naked" in the ship, "girds himself" at the warning of John (Jn xxi 7); and is told that, whereas he "had girded himself, another should gird him"—for his death (18).

And in the Exodus-chapter—after his great work is finished—his Angel bids him "Gird thyself, cast thy garment about thee, and Follow Me" (A xii 8). The remarkable parallels of Rev iii 18 and xvi 15 are explained later (see p. 246, 251). The whole

[1] See pp. 212–215.

figure, throughout, is sinister with acute spiritual peril both in life and death.

And—though it stands by itself, and will be considered later in a larger aspect—we must add here what is perhaps the most remarkable allegory of all,

The Race to the Tomb. This is a vivid commentary on the Lord's last words to Peter. John first "arrives" at the Tomb, and "looks in"; but Peter is the first to "enter" it; then, John "enters" in his turn (Jn xx 3–10). For John, the first *sight* of death (assuming the early date of the Apocalypse and the persecution of John which gave it occasion, Rev i 9); yet he is to "tarry", for Peter is to be the first to die; then, after the Parousia, John too shall die.

It will by now be clear, that the radiating centre of these and other Fates of Peter is the Night of Passion; where we have all the elements combined: the Sign of Three, the Sleeping, the Smiting, the Maidservant and Door-keeper, the Door and the Porch, the Following, the Turning, the Going-Out, and the Cock-crowing; and, implicit in denial and tears, the Girding of Nakedness.

And this Night is preceded by two "Clusters" of Fates, and followed by two. The two former are: the Rebuking incident after the Commission; and the Petrine Parable. In (i) we have the Turning; the Following ("Behind Me, Satan!" "If any man will come behind Me, let him take his cross, and Follow Me"); the Denial ("Let him deny himself" ". . . if any man deny Me, I will deny him"); the "taking of the cross" (Peter's death: Mk viii 33 ff;

with ver 38, cp Mtt x 33) ; and the announcement that " some standing by " would live to the Parousia (Mk ix 1). In (ii) we have the Door-keeper commanded to watch ; the Beating of the Menservants ; the Maidservants ; the Cockcrowing ; and the Sleeping (Mk xiii 34, 35, L xii 41 ff).

And the first subsequent Cluster is the great Finale, where we have the Nakedness and Girding, the Fire of Coals, the Threefold Question and Commission, the Girding and Crucifixion, the Turning, the Following, and the reference to Judas (Jn xxi). While the second is the Chapter of Exodus from Function (Acts xii) ; where practically all Petrine omen musters, like a choir at requiem, to dirge his departure.

This remarkable Petrine peroration must have a chapter to itself. But first, let us once more recall our bearings. Our point is, not that St Peter should be warned before his Gospel denial, but (a) that such warnings should give obvious evidence of an ulterior perspective ; (b) that they should be repeated after his absolution and before his ministry ; and (c) that a final shower of them should usher him out of pre-eminent activity into a long evening of almost total eclipse. From these data it is a fair induction (i) that his ministerial life was regarded by the only real Authority as falling cleanly into two utterly-distinct and dissimilar parts ; and (ii) that the second and doubly-longer part lies under some mysterious spiritual shadow, foreknown to Him who commissioned him as Rock.

What does this prove in the question of the content of that Commission, and of the claims based upon

it ? By itself, nothing. Yet if it can be shown that the Commission was not official, but actual ; that it related to the discharge of an undertaking, and not to the life-tenure of a person : then these conclusions are of much value as an adjunct to proof, and as a light upon things proven.

I submit that this theory of the Commission has been established. If so, the course of our enquiry promises worse than ever for the claims of a supreme, royal, and infallible Petrine Vicariate of Christ, transferable by ballot after death.

CHAPTER XVI

The Ghosts of Acts XII

"Art Thou come to me to call my sin to remembrance?"
1 K xvii 18

Whatever Peter's part upon the Apostolic stage is to be, then, he enters upon it to the grim strains of an overture of warning. I think of his life as a kind of Æschylean trilogy. The first drama has closed in repentance, pardoning love, and solemn reinstation; but still I hear this Chorus of omens, with its muted accompaniment of irony.

The second drama opens; how changed a scene! all is brightness, power, the triumph of a young idea; Peter "plants his brethren," the Rock proves a triple strength, the Foundation is well and truly laid, the Doors stand wide to all mankind. Never until the action is nearing its completion is a single Fate heard to mutter. When lo, for the second time the scene closes in with clouds and darkness.

For in fuller muster than ever, that oracular Chorus returns. The Night of Prison re-enacts the Night of Retaliation and Denial. Every painful association, every harrowing memory of days we thought forgotten, throngs and thrills through that last Prison-episode, from which our hero for the last time "goes out"—leaving history for mystery—"to another place." The second drama closes.

The last, and longest, is to be almost darkness ; and dark is the auspice of its overture.

This final shower of Fates does not come abruptly. A little cloud has been gathering. The third scene of Peter's Function, the admission of Cornelius, has just transpired ; and over this already the shadows have begun to creep. Peter's "Angel" has begun to make himself better known ; he has appeared to Cornelius, accepting his prayers and directing him to visit Peter (A x 3–6). The "Porch" (πυλών) has been glimpsed (17) ; the "Going-Out" has returned into evidence (23). The Third Pentecost has solemnly supervened, the Holy Ghost descending on the Gentiles with the gift of tongues and corporate baptism, "even as on us at the beginning" (x 44–46, xi 15) ; and over all—in the triple vision of Peter thrice-related, the number of the men who "sought Peter", and the triple mention of the "Angel"—has fallen the old ominous Sign of Three.

And it has been made clear who the "Angel" is. For he is a "Holy Angel" (x 22) ; he is Κύριος (4) ; and the Spirit says to Peter of the messengers, "*I* have sent them" (20). The "Angel" is a theophany ; none other than the Holy Spirit Himself—the Mentor of the Rock's labours throughout. For has he not been "filled with the Holy Ghost" ?

But now these labours are to be sealed. Upon the Rock, now crowned with surest masonry, the Spirit's task is done ; for the rest, it is the Man who stands in need. Be sure the Holy Ghost came never nearer to Peter, than when He "departed" from him.

I tabulate the Fates of the twelfth chapter of the Acts. They announce, with one acclaim, the noble

discharge of a threefold Trust and the dangers that wait upon its quittance. As the relief from a long strain, the lifting of a great responsibility, places a man in reaction and lays his loosened moral forces at the level of his weakest nerve : so, in the goal of the Pioneer, the ageing Cephas meets the danger-signal of the Saint.

	Acts xii.
Herod (after the third or Gentile phase of Peter's work) " stretches out his hands and kills James with the sword "	The death of his best friend's brother strikes the note of death for Peter ; with warning reminder of Malchus, against whom he had " stretched out his hand, and drawn his sword " (Mtt xxvi 51)
The Passover is at hand	This, mentioned only here in the Acts, recalls the Lord's Passion
Herod puts Peter in prison	He had been " ready to go with his Lord to prison and to death "
Peter is " sleeping " in the " prison " at " night "	Recalls the " sleep " in Gethsemane (unwatchfulness associated with death)
The " Keepers before the Door " kept the prison	Door and Door-Keepers give out the Denial *motif* (Doors and their equivalents are named seven times in the Chapter)

7 "An Angel of the Lord stood by him"	"His Angel" (see ver 15); the personified genius of his completed activities as Rock
A Light shines in the cell	φῶς; the word used of the Fire in the High Priest's Court (L xxii 56)
The Angel smites Peter's side	An omen of death. A reminder of Christ's Side smitten. A reminder of Malchus
And "awakes" him	He is recalled to watchfulness
Saying, "Rise up quickly"	(Death and) resurrection "before I come"
8 "Gird thyself . . . cast thy garment about thee"	Death ("when young, thou girdedst thyself . . . another shall gird thee"); and unwatchfulness (the "nakedness" and "girding his coat about him" in the ship)
"Bind on thy sandals"	He is going on a long journey, not only from prison, but from function. There is a hint also of wider apostolic travels (for the significance of "sandals", see Mk vi 9; Eph vi 15) and of death
"And Follow Me"	Christ's last words to him—and see pp. 196, 197

9 "And he went out"	Peter's "Exodus". Repeated thrice (10, 17). From function now; from life afterwards (he calls his death his "exodus", 2 P i 15.) For the "going-out" from Denial, see p. 197
"And he did not know it was true, what was happening through the Angel—but thought he was seeing a vision"	A hint to us of the mystical character of the narrative. Peter felt the inner personal meaning in every detail, and so—though in a real sense "true", it seemed like a dream
10 They pass out through three "Gates"	Here begins a typic review of Peter's whole past work; wherein in three phases he has "opened" the Church—after having "girded himself" in repentance
The third and last is "the Iron Gate leading into the City"	The admission of the Gentiles in the person of Cornelius; the goal of all past revelation, and the greatest and most daring enterprise of all. This "Iron (type of Rome) Gate" was the "Gate of Hades" which did not "prevail". It "led to the City"—the very stronghold of Satan. Also to the "City of God"; for it completed the Church as Catholic

"Which opened to them of its own accord"	A wonderful figure—Cornelius had come to St Peter spontaneously. (αὐτομάτη used elsewhere only in Mk iv 28, "The earth beareth fruit of herself"). There is also the thought of Peter's death; its "door" was to open spontaneously, through martyrdom
"And they Went Out, and passed on through one street"	The stretch of life that yet remained to Peter—not Gates to be stormed, but a "street" (Observe that Peter "went out" to convert Cornelius (A x 23)
"*And straightway the Angel departed from him*"	The point of the Chapter—the withdrawal of the "spiritual uplift" of his special Function, marking its close
11 "And when Peter was come to himself——"	When he realised once more the nakedness of his mere manhood—
He said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord sent forth His Angel"	He wakes to the fact that he has been specially protected for the period of his Primacy

12 "And having realised it"

The word *συνιδών* means this; not, "Having considered". A startling retrospective light had burst upon Peter

12, 13 He came to Mark's mother's house, and "Knocked at the Door of the Porch"

Here begins a most vivid waking dream of the Denial. For Peter has now to face danger! The "Porch", thrice named, recalls the Porch in which he denied (Mtt xxvi 71) The "Knocking" recalls the Bridegroom's "knocking" in the Petrine Parable; also the fruitless "standing without and knocking at the Door" (L xii 36, xiii 25) see Rev. iii. 20

"A Maid came to answer"

παιδίσκη: the word of the "Maid" of Denial—and of the "Bondwoman" of his coming Denial (Gal iv 22, ii 12); the rival "Door-Keeper" who would cause him to shut where he had opened. For her, see p. 195

14 "And when she recognised Peter's voice"

It was by his "speech" that he had been known for Christ's friend (Mtt xxvi 73)

"She reported that Peter was standing before the Porch"	Before the Denial, Peter "was standing before the Door without" (Jn xviii 16). For the whole "Door" episode, see Rev iii 20—and my p. 196
15 "But she *confidently affirmed* that it was even so"	The most amazing clue in the Chapter; and one which would be convincing even if it stood by itself. For the word (διϊσχυρίζετο) is used only here and at L xxii 59, where "another confidently affirmed" that he was a Galilean
"And they said, It is *his Angel*"	Their unconscious (?) testimony to the "Angel" of his late "deliverance" both from prison and from Primacy; the tutelary spirit of his enterprise from the first (see Is lxiii 9; Gen xxiv 7; Ex xxiii 20, etc.)
17 "And he said, Tell these things to James, and to the brethren"	"To James"—the sign of resignation in partial favour of the James whom we later find "deciding" at the Jerusalem Congress, in Peter's presence (A xv 19; see my ch. v)

"And he Went Out —and Departed to Another Place"	The final and emphatic sign of his witting and willing resignation of his Primacy, and relegation to the status of an ordinary Apostle. (But note that, on the last occasion of his "going out" into the darkness, he "wept bitterly")
18 "And as soon as it was day, there was no small to-do among the soldiers, as to '*What, then, was become of Peter?*'"	What, indeed? Men have never done asking. Searching the records, they may well wonder. It is as though a brilliantly-lighted express train had disappeared into a tunnel
19 "And when Herod had searched for him, and found him not, he examined the guards—and ordered them to be put to death"	Not as exegesis, but as commentary, I would remark that this is precisely what men have done. The "guards" of the Petrine question are the plain statements of Scripture concerning his Commission and work. Blind to the real Peter, men have turned on these, and done violence to them

What a dream of the parting of the ways! Past and future, glory and abasement, threat and promise, cut to shreds and thrown into one kaleidoscope;

soul-rudiments to con again, present self-discovery, things new and old to hope and fear and, sun-clear through all, the annunciation of a Change! Well might he "think he saw a vision". Well might he "realise it all" (συνιδών) as he paced the dark streets to Mary's house; well might he say, "Now I Know that the Lord hath sent His Angel!" For all his work had been a Vision of Him who is Invisible. Roused from his fleshly sleep by Jesus the Angel of the Lord, loosed from the "two chains" of his besetting pride, girded and sandalled with grace, he had gone forth to his labour, opened his "Three Gates" in the power of God; and now, quit of the burden which had proved his shield, he "was come to himself"; and to Simon son of John, what was "self", but an ancient foe?

Of further and yet more urgent renewals of the same familiar cycle of warning, with their startling confirmation of our dealings with this Chapter of fate, we have not yet said one word. For the moment, let the Chapter speak for itself. Forget the Antioch sequel. With what *a priori* light does it leave us?

There can be no two opinions about the question. Peter's future is one of continuous and vital danger, involving some degree of characteristic lapse, with preponderant and final victory. See that this is so. On the one hand, where is the use, the justice, or the kindness, of this elaborate exhumation of a long-forgiven sin—after years of faithful service—save for a new and all-too-urgent reason? Failing such reason, what wanton cruelty; what a bitter reward: not merely that Peter should be so crucified before

his time, but that you and I, after nearly two millenniums, should unearth and criticise his pain! Did He not say, "Thy sins shall be no more remembered"? God does not mock. Whom He loves, and wills to win, He rebukes and chastens; and His way with His beloved son that night, as he watched out the old year of his glory under a sky so lowering, was the way of the omniscient Love, Who once "turned, and looked upon Peter".

And, on the other hand, were warning doomed to be fruitless, and the end disaster; were the name of Cephas, immortal Foundation of the Kingdom of God, fore-attaint of any blemish worse than wounds: then indeed it would be conceivable that wisdom, which in such case were less than Wisdom, should conceal the issue of an abortion so appalling; but could we imagine the fatuity, even in such a Being, of advertising it in process?

We must not leave this Chapter without noticing its remarkable conclusion (20–23). These verses, which snatch us away suddenly to Herod's death-scene, read like an anticlimax of irrelevance. Torn from the solemn and portentous darkness of a saint's introspection to listen to the bombast of a royal fool, we rub our eyes. Yet not so Peter, who, though by now hidden in "a different place", was not beyond the reach of Court intelligence; nor we, if by now we know too much about him to be lured from his scent by contextual surprises. The "digression" is the vital climax of the Chapter; the crown of Peter's lessoning; and a standing witness against the spiritual posterity of his sin.

The key is the Angel. The experience of Peter and the fate of Herod are both the work of the same hand; and both by "smiting". There are only two mentions, in the N.T., of an "angel smiting"; and both are in this Chapter; and of seven mentions of this Angel, the first and the last are these two "smitings"; and in these two cases only of the seven, he is called "an Angel of the Lord". It is "Peter's Angel" (15) who, after "smiting" Peter, has gone on to "smite" Herod; and for the same end—Peter's learning. And ours.

The two statements are as follows: in verse 7, "And an Angel of the Lord smote Peter on the side, saying, Rise quickly"; in verse 23, "And an Angel of the Lord smote Herod, because he gave not the glory to God".

Here are two effects of "smiting": upon Peter, spiritual recollection; upon Herod, death. And the smiting of Herod is the completion of Peter's object-lesson. For Herod, in accepting honour which encroached on God's, sinned through Pride; and Pride was Peter's congenital ancient failing.

That pride, we remember, had two issues: a negative and a positive; moral fearfulness, and aggressive domination. The former has already been poignantly dealt with, in the Rhoda scene. The latter is now schooled through Herod's fate; of which his escaped victim would be swift to hear. And wonderfully is the lesson condensed. For the tendency to be "the greatest" (L xxii 24) and to "smite" (L xii 45, and Malchus) were one.

Herod, in his megalomania, had trespassed on the prerogative of God. The "kings of the Gentiles

exercise lordship". Peter must beware, even in faint degree, of the same disease. The warning marks the close of his tremendous and god-like instrumentality, in view of the spiritual dangers of its retrospect, and the temptation to presume on its privileges and claims now obsolete. In life, in death, the Rock must "give God the glory".

Peter, we may imagine, was not himself in great danger in this regard. Much prophecy is germinal. What would have been his thought, could he have seen himself arrayed for Herod's part in this wonderful prophetic parable—this scene of pompous Temporal Power and Divine Prerogative: "And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the Throne . . . and the people shouted, The voice of a God, and not of a man"?

There is no harm in pomp—where it belongs. Herod had a right to kingly vesture, nor was he punished for it; for he was a king. He was punished for accepting estimates that trenched on God's supremacy. He was not punished even for an act of his own; but for an act of the people: nor for an act at all, but for an omission. It was not the blatant self-apotheosis of a Caius or a Claudius; it was a deification by acclaim, which he failed to rebuke and suppress. "Glory" was his by right (A xii 23): but he did not ascribe it to its Source.

A bishop has the right to wear splendid (though not kingly) vestments; but not to accept, even from an acclaimant world, the title of Supreme and Infallible Head of the Church of God. It is not an individual, but an idea, that is pilloried in Herod's death. As Judas and Ananias are prophylactics

against avarice and falsehood, so is Herod's fate the fore-judgment of an unborn conception of the Church –*Substratum pro Superposito:* that the human Rock of her foundation should supplant the Divine Head of the Corner. Such a conception is humanity's consummate experiment in "not giving God the glory". The Emperor-worship was the crude folly of men who did not know God. But this is *lèse-majesté.*

SECTION C

Peter's Spiritual Trustee

CHAPTER XVII

Peter and John

" And they two ran together " Jn xx 4

And now we enter upon new and more recondite fields of quest. Save for two brief glimpses, we cannot track Peter further ; but we can still sense him in the heart of a friend. His great part is played, he has left the stage ; but his exit is the cue for a brother-actor's entrance, to whose part it belongs that he should sometimes sign and call to a Peter behind the scene ; and in those " asides " of appeal and gesture, though they tell us no whit indeed of Peter's whereabouts and doings, yet we read that spiritually he is not far off in that " other place " of his—and that he is still needing those same warnings, those old reminders, beneath whose sombre auspice he went out from us into the night. Who is this friend and mentor of the dropt Pilot's less answerable days, this reversionary to the guardianship of his Saviour and his Angel ?

When Cornelius, by his spiritual birth, made the Church Catholic, Satan was foiled. Christ's plea had prevailed ; the faith of Cephas, sifted, had

"failed not". Virtually, the Kingdom had come. Yet there was time and room for a deadly counter-stroke. What a glorious auspice for the new House of Faith, if the Founder should betray his Lord!

Would it not be strange, then, if such a man were left alone; left in all the spiritual solitude of discounted greatness; his compeers world-scattered, none to explore with him the intimate memories of the Lord; left, amid arduous work and keen temptation, to brood upon his surrendered Keys, and rack his ageing nerves with the obsession of his own vague jeopardy? Left, without a true fast friend and counsellor to bear his great soul's overcharges, to hearten and to warn him, to stand to him for "Angel of the Lord"?

The Spirit was with Peter; but such men have dark intervals amid their too-exuberant strength. A man disposed to self-reliance upbears his own prop; he is of all men most dependent. I can fancy that friendless work would warp a heart like his, sanguine, extrovert, used to power, past prime, advancing in hardships, faced with a blind future and the promise of a cross. Moral theologians tell us of "acedia"; surely its conditions were here.

Such a friend was supplied for Peter, by the Lord of Wisdom, in that prince of spiritual love and vision, St John. The evidences of this secret provision are many and wonderful; but a certain determined sympathy is needed in the gathering. Love is called blind; say rather, eagle-eyed: and where love is to be descried, love alone is vision.

And with profound conviction I affirm that John, whose love was a steady interior burning, loved Peter

in his Lord —and was given to be Peter's mentor and guide. All his life, "Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did that other Disciple"; to the "Tomb" —Peter's last day—"they two ran together".

In John I see Peter's needed complement; feeding his rugged prowess with that deeper fire. The quiet ardent contemplative could no more have led that first thunderous adventure than could the hardy rough-hewer have conceived the "In principio" or written the Apocalypse. But "Peter and John" could be a perfect strength; for to Peter's hands and tongue, John could be soul. It is to John that we owe the Church; for the completed Rock was "Peter and John". And I pray your patience till I show that it is to John that we owe Peter.

In the Gospels, which are the Church's four-part overture, this provision is given out progressively; but not openly; for Peter's need was not for enemies to glory in him. And where should we expect the note to be sounded, but in the Gospel of St John? and where to culminate, but at its close? Of its last verses, two Apostles are the theme; the only two (save one) of whose future the Lord made prediction; and it is here.

"Jesus saith to Peter, Follow Me. Peter, turning, seeth the Disciple whom Jesus loved following—him who also leaned back on His breast at the Supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth Thee?" This so fell out, to prepare Peter—and is recorded, if we can receive it, to prepare ourselves—for that sacred trust of Peter's soul, whose faithful discharge to the end of Peter's life the Evangelist recalled as he wrote. And the key lies in the detailed reminiscence of the

question at the Last Supper, which is intended to recall and record St John in his rôle of *mediator for Peter in a matter touching Peter's spiritual danger.* It is this very part—both as intercessor and hierophant—that John is to play for Peter to the end.

And where this spiritual danger is to culminate, the whole context apprises us. Before the Parousia, martyrdom will offer itself to Peter. This, to his loyal courage, will prove a supreme trial. But, the Lord intimates to him, *John will be living at the time.*

Now there can be no point in this hint to Peter concerning John's future, unless he is to take it as foreshadowing some association with John, which will be the cause of support to him in his hour of trial. But Peter is not to go through his life-work counting on this vague and final possibility. *His* care is to be faithful in life and death. The Lord is not going to fore-close contingency to give him an excuse for leaning upon others. The only commentary on prophecy is the event. Time enough for him to remember the oracle if and when he needs it.

And so He answers Peter's discursive question ("Lord—and *this* man—what?") with a masterpiece of two-edged words, not determining yet signifying, revealing and then letting fall the veil: "If I wish him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? do thou follow Me!"

Now St John, when he wrote down the prophecy of Peter's death, interpreted it by the issue: "This He spake, signifying by what manner of death he should *glorify God*". In the light of the same issue we may surmise that John had helped him to do it.

For the dialogue's whole tenor tells our intuition —without waiting for the mass of more concrete evidence—that these two could never leave one another; and that their Lord never intended that they should. Those who are familiar with the reticulous thought-associations of the Fourth Gospel will read in these verses an implicit charge to St John as deliberate as the explicit bequest to him of the Blessed Mother on the Cross.

And such indeed is the intimation of the dialogue's very first words. Thrice, in His threefold catechism, our Lord addresses St Peter by a name used only here and at Peter's first call: "Simon, son of John". I submit that I am neither trivial nor fanciful (my argument does not need such bolstering) when I say that in the form of this expression our Lord is adumbrating the spiritual fatherhood, which he is about to confer implicitly on the beloved Disciple. Of this meaning interplay of names, there are several cases in the Fourth Gospel (see p. 148 ff for "Judas son of Simon").

This final intimation, then, impels us to review, from the beginning, the relation between the two Disciples; and our Lord's attitude towards it. Much and growing light rewards us. We find that the two, with their brothers, were friends and partners when the Baptist was their master, and became Jesus' disciples on the same day. John and Andrew first joined Jesus; then Andrew "found" his brother Simon, and told him "We have 'found' the Messiah"; whereupon Simon, brought to Jesus, at once received the call, "Thou art Simon, the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas" (Jn i 35–42).

Thus, in the first introduction and naming of Peter, John had a silent instrumentality; which (with the significant assimilation of the name of Simon's father, "Iona" becoming "Ioanes") foreshadows his whole future relation to this new spiritual "son".

From this moment we see the association growing and narrowing. In the first great Sea-miracle we are told that James and John were "partners with Simon" (L v 10); the forecast of a deeper "fellowship". Thrice Peter and John—with James, whose martyrdom was to be the signal for Peter's night of deeper dependence upon John, Acts xii 2—are chosen sharers in the Lord's intensest hours, by the maiden's deathbed, upon Tabor, and in Gethsemane; every page in holy lore they must have turned together. To the three, with Andrew (Mk xiii 3) Jesus gave the great apocalypse of the Parousia.

But it is from the approach of the Passion, with its Petrine crisis, that the closer dual link begins. The period opens with the joint mission of Peter and John (analogy and Marcan detail are our guides in the first case) first, to fetch the ass, secondly, to prepare the Passover; a double prefigurement of their association in the founding of the Church. And it is from this time that we begin to see, in growing outline, the "mentor" attitude of St John. And, in the process, Peter's dependence and John's instrumentality seem to develop together.

At Peter's request, John ascertains from the Lord who shall betray Him. Here we have him mediating for Peter, in connexion with Peter's unquiet conscience. (Twice, in the Gospels, Peter "beckons to

John " for help : the first time, to James and John (L v 7) ; the second, to John).

John, " known to the High Priest ", brings Peter into the Court. Here he uses his interest for Peter, in a context of Denial.

In the Race to the Tomb, " They two ran together ; and the other Disciple outran Peter, and came first to the Tomb—and stooped down, and looked in ". Here we have John, in the Apostolic aftertime, " running better " than Peter ; and being the first to " come to " death and " look into " it (see p. 199) ; " Then cometh Simon Peter, *following him ;* and entered into the Tomb ". That is, Peter, with John for mentor, should be the first to *die*. Here, then, we see John transcending Peter ; influentially leading him ; and setting him the example of suffering. Finally, John himself " enters the Tomb ". For " Jesus said not, that he should not die ; but, If I wish him to tarry ".

Again, when they entered the Tomb, St John was the first to read the Sign of the Graveclothes ; which, with the Face-cloth, were lying as our Lord had worn them—a conclusive evidence of etherealised Resurrection. It was John who " saw " this " and believed " (Jn xx 8) ; without doubt, immediately pointing it out to Peter. Here we have John enlightening Peter by his spiritual perception of the nature of the risen Lord.

And once more, in the Ship, St John is the first to recognise Jesus on the Shore ; and at his word Peter " girds " his " nakedness " and leaps into the Sea. We have seen reason to anticipate, in Peter's death, a passionate act of self-devotion arising out

of a recall from unwatchfulness; here we gather to whom Peter would owe this recall. Thus we have John spiritually perceiving the *nearness* of the Lord's Parousia, and warning Peter.

So here is John, standing to Peter in the light of Friend at Court, Mediator with Christ, Constant Companion and Guide, Spiritual Enlightener, and Herald of the Presence of Christ. It is an intimate dependence, growing as we read; and only conceivable as progressive both in duration and in spiritual depth. The devoted attachment of Peter to his friend, at the time when the Lord left the earth, is well seen in his last question to Him (Jn xxi 21). Even when foretold of his own death, his first thought is for the fate of John.

We do not wonder, then, when we find Peter and John—just as they were sent together to "make ready the Passover" against the "coming" of the Lord—leashed together in the building and making of the Church, regarded as the sphere of the Parousia. As from Gethsemane, so from Pentecost, "Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another Disciple".

Seven times in the first eight chapters of the Acts—though John does not once speak—the two are named in close co-operation. "Peter and John go up into the Temple"; the lame man "sees Peter and John"; "Peter, fastening his eyes on him—with John—said, Look on Us"; he "held Peter and John"; Peter denies "that We have made him to walk"; "*they* spoke to the people"; they "put *them* in ward"; they "beheld the boldness of Peter and John"; "they urged *them* not to

speak in the Name" ; "Peter and John answered" ; "they sent unto them Peter and John, and *they* laid their hands on them". The insistence is redundant ; it shows us the two intimately working together as one ; we may see how Peter speaks and acts, with John's silence for his soul.

Without that quiet moral support, would the Rock have so stoutly founded, the Porter so boldly opened? For how many difficulties bridged during that first ardent campaign, for how many anxieties allayed, shall we never hear John's praise? How many times did Peter "beckon" to his strong and silent Achates, so well "known to the High Priest", as "they two ran together"? Peter seems to enter upon his enterprise in some confidence of personal leadership ; then, from the healing of the Cripple, throughout the trouble with the Sanhedrin, and the confirmation in Samaria, he seems to lean on John ; at the last, in the great Cornelius-work, we find him once more, and entirely, alone (here, his Fates begin to gather) ; and, alone amid shadows, he departs from sight.

At the time of the Congress he is once more with John (Gal ii 9) ; the death of James has no doubt drawn them closer than ever. Had John been with Peter in Cornelius' house, would Peter have better remembered his great confession made there? Had John gone with him to Antioch, would St Paul have had cause to blame him?

Now, we should hardly expect that John, this Spiritual Trustee, after continuing with Peter in his greatness, should desert him when its zenith was past ; especially if, as we have gathered, strange

clouds of trial menaced his later days. None had better reason to know Peter's Fates, than John; and I can think of one station in his course at least, at which he must have "beckoned" to him; to whom else should he tell the story of his strange night's vigil in Jerusalem; who better could interpret its intimately-personal reminders of immortal moments with their common Master? The death of James had broken up the favoured trio; the two surviving witnesses of God's Glory and Agony were drawn into a bond deeper than friendship and stronger than death.

Can we trace these spiritual brothers further, then —into the darkness? The gloom is thick, but we must try. For great rays of "invisible light" are yonder; and if they do not discover us his scenes of action, they unsparingly search out and illuminate his soul. And the hand that wields the searchlight is the hand of John; and the place from which it streams is Patmos.

CHAPTER XVIII

Their Joint Work in Asia

"We made known to you" 2 P i 16

I have sketched elsewhere (Introd.) my reasons for assigning the Apocalypse of St John to the close of the reign of Claudius, who died A.D. 54; and for regarding it as an open manifesto to the whole of contemporary Christendom, announcing the nearness of that catastrophic judgment of the Hebrew Dispensation as consummated in its Messiah, which duly took place during the closing years of the seventh decade of the Christian era—and which New Testament eschatology with one voice associates with the Parousia of Christ. In view of this judicial visitation—whose phenomena were but the echoes of a spiritual judgment—the summary object of the Manifesto is to warn Christians against the Emperor-cultus which was destined to culmination as the criterion of the Neronian Persecution, and to exhort them to martyrdom in the cause of their coming King.

My design is now to demonstrate a proposition for which, startle as it may, I fear no eventual foe but prejudice. It is, that this open Letter—for the Apocalypse is that—*teems with veiled encouragement and warning to St Peter*. In its every part we can

trace once we have the key of Peter's Fates– the concern of the inspiring Christ, expressed in the writer's personal all-remembering love, for Peter's faithfulness under persecution in life and death. The voice is the voice of the Spirit, but the pen is the pen of a friend who knew Peter through and through, who had passed with him through the unforgettable fires of Passion-tide and knew by heart every pang that had enhanced his crucifixion, every little homely incident whose memory could wake his heart to pride of love and shame, every finest phase of the Treatment that had nursed him through that sharp Inoculation into richer Life.

And the hand that, long after, recorded all those old experiences for us, was the hand that now recalled it to Peter. There is one kind of evidence which critics of the Sacred Books—the most internecine tribe that lives—with tacit unanimity repudiate : it is that of intuitive personal knowledge of the writer's touch. Seeing that such knowledge is by its nature individual and incommunicable, criticism is as much justified in discounting it as would be any other branch of logical science.

Here is my handicap ; for it is to the instinct of the quiet loving student of St John's spirit that I am appealing for the unity of the Apocalypse, in itself and with the Fourth Gospel, as the work of the Apostle John. Intellect must hustle intuition, for all upstarts hustle ; yet it must not be quite forgotten that sympathy is the oldest and surest form of knowledge we have ; and, *pace* our German masters, if there be a court in which spiritual instinct might crave a voice, it is that of spiritual literature.

And I have dared to put it in the witness-box, and bid it appeal to my readers aloud and fearlessly, that if any have an ear for vibrations above or below the gamut of hard proof, he may hear. Listen while it claims, in accents faint but firm, to see Peter in the Revelation; Peter, still self-menaced from self's old double ambush, Aggression and Fear; never to arrive at final self-atonement, but through the meek prowess of that death, which more than his transient Primacy counted in the care and counsels of the Lord of the Kingdom.

Glance now at the first page of the Apocalypse. It is a Letter; formally local, essentially œcumenial. Nominally it is addressed to a little ring of representative Christian communities (after the Apocalyptic manner, seven) in Proconsular Asia. This province is always called Asia in the N.T.; we shall call it so. It was only a western strip of the large peninsular afterwards called Asia Minor; which latter roughly comprised five districts: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, "Asia", and Bithynia.

This "Asian" destination of the Letter connects it *prima facie* with St Peter. For it is to the Christianised "Dispersion" (Jews settled abroad and more or less Gentilised after the Return from Captivity) of these five districts, that St Peter's First Epistle, which is dated A.D. 58–64, is addressed; and the five included "Asia". This at once promises a clue. For it points to the early evangelisation of all Asia Minor; and suggests that our Apostles, true to their Lord's ideal of a mission, "Two and two", had been labouring in that great field together.

First, as touching Peter. Eusebius quotes Origen to the effect that he "appears to have preached" in these places; and St Jerome (for what his witness is worth) connects this mission with his episcopate at Antioch, "before he came to Rome in the second year of Claudius". If these statements of his work in Asia Minor be mere inferences from the Epistle, there is an ancient tradition to the same effect which is evidently independent of it, named in the Syrian *Doctrina Apostolorum* and the Gnostic Acts of Peter and Andrew.

Then, as regards John. Whatever foundation Eusebius, or Origen, may have had for his statement that when the Apostles mapped out their work, Asia was allotted to John, it agrees with the intimate pastoral knowledge of that region shown by him in the early part of the sixth decade—to which we assign the Apocalypse; as also does his well-attested connexion with Ephesus, of whose prior time-limit we know nothing. If, then, we see Peter and John both working in Asia Minor, and John in a part of it included in Peter's area, their whole previous relation makes it impossible to see them otherwise than in closest touch there.

And this is strongly confirmed by St Peter's Second Epistle. The Petrinity of this late-received *antilegomenon*, never demolished by one single sound argument, will be seen to answer luminously to our Apocalyptic key (see p. 264 ff). As it calls itself a "second Epistle" (iii 1) common sense identifies its destination with that of the First; and there is nothing to disprove this view. The writer mentions that St Paul had written to the Church or Churches

addressed; for that matter, he had written to Galatia at least; and there was quite enough in his Epistle to that Church to account for St Peter's respectful but somewhat wry-mouthed comment (iii 15, 16). Or, if 2 Peter were written in the early "sixties", he may have been referring to St Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, the Ephesians, or the lost Epistle to Laodicea. In any case, there is nothing beyond the terrible *ipse dixit* of negative prudence—that bugbear of criticism—to cause us to reject the authenticity of 2 Peter.

Indeed, there is much internal reason to assign, in the 2 Peter and Jude problem, the palm of originality to 2 Peter. Moreover, the author of Jude almost tells us as much. For what can Jude 3, 4 mean but that the writer—when on the point of penning an ordinary hortatory epistle—was interrupted by the authoritative "necessity" of transcribing an Encyclical Letter, which had been drawn up in condemnation of a new false teaching? And what more natural, than that the Circular in question had emanated from the larger jurisdiction of St Peter?

In this Epistle, then, St Peter refers to his collaboration with St John in the region addressed, and states that they had there preached the story of the Transfiguration—their joint experience—as an earnest of the Parousia (i 16–18). If, then, he is writing to Asia Minor, that settles the question. Both Epistles had been preceded, in that region, by a Petro-Johannine mission; and the much-objected absence of personal reminiscence in the First Epistle has nothing to say. On the contrary, the warmth

and intimacy of the tone of that Epistle would be almost a liberty, as coming from a stranger.

As to the idea that Silvanus, by whom the letter is sent (1 P v 12), is employed by the writer by way of "introduction"; or that Silvanus, to serve some Pauline interest, persuaded St Peter to write: I can only say that this is the kind of stuff to which we have been in bondage too long. Silvanus is simply obliging in the capacity of postman; and if he happened to be a friend of St Paul, was there anything to prevent St Peter knowing him, or asking him to carry his letter – if he happened to be going in the required direction? When will learned men learn that it was possible for the Apostles to perform simple ordinary actions without motives of polemic or plotting?

Here at once St Paul comes in to give us pause. Was he not the Pioneer of Asia—and indeed of the whole Peninsula? Do we not hear of him, in the "forties" and "fifties", in Perga and Attalia of Pamphylia; Antioch in Pisidia; Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe in Lycaonia; in Phrygia and Galatia; at Troas, Miletus, and Ephesus? Did he not stay at Ephesus two years; and did not "all they that dwelt in Asia", as the result of his Ephesian teaching, "hear" of Christ?

Yes. But this, all told, covers but a small portion of Asia Minor. Well does Dr Bigg point out how very exaggerated a notion we are apt to form both of the extent of St Paul's influence in this great region, and of the virginity of the ground he broke. He never set foot in Bithynia, Pontus, or Cappadocia—three

of the five regions written to by St Peter; nor in Lycia, Caria, or Mysia of "Asia"; and probably only skirted Phrygia and Galatia on the south. His stays in the places of the Peninsula were short, and his objective doubtless mainly Gentilic. St Luke's accounts of St Paul's travels in it read exhaustively; but a tour through a dozen towns, with only one long stay, amounts to very little in a country larger than the British Isles.

And when we come to "Asia" proper, we find that St Paul's hold there was late and transient. His famous two years' stay in Ephesus was not till A.D. 54; we do not hear that he visited any other of the Churches named in the Apocalypse; he wrote much later to Colossae and Laodicea, though we have no evidence of his presence in either of them; and the large and general statement, that as a result of his Ephesian preaching "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the Word", means merely that visitors to Ephesus spread the report of his teaching on their return. Nor does his Asian influence seem to have been deep or lasting, for in 2 Tim i 15 "all in Asia" have "turned away from him"; as happened to a great extent in Galatia (Gal i 6, iv 15 etc.)

The notion that during his Ephesian stay St Paul "founded the (highly-Jewish) Churches of the Apocalypse", is a very wild one. There is little evidence of his having done so; nor any trace of his character or spirit in their pictures. Nor is there any evidence that there had been no Christian teachers in "Asia" before him, or that the twelve disciples of the Baptist whom he found at Ephesus (A xix 1) and who were probably not recognised by Christians

at all, represented all the Christianity there was in the city. It would be preposterous to suppose that, more than twenty years after His Ascension, Christ had taken no root in this great capital.

Nay, we may be sure that "Asia" had, from earliest days, conceived the Seed. Tidings, at least, of the new Way took a very few years to reach every corner of the Empire. Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, crowded with Jews from all parts, was a powder-magazine; the explosion Peter fired that day filled the world with Gospel shrapnel. Among those present St Luke pointedly includes men from "Cappadocia, Pontus, *Asia*, Phrygia, and Pamphylia"; the list is practically that addressed by St Peter in his Epistle; and suggests that the wide report was speedily followed up by missions to all of them, from which the writer was thinking back.

There is strong presumption for a very early, rapid, extensive, and entirely pre-Pauline campaign throughout all Asia Minor. Explosive, again, was the persecution that followed upon the death of Stephen, filling Antioch with missionaries—the natural base for Asia Minor. Far and wide, be sure, the fire was flung. If, before St Paul wrote to Rome (say) in 58, unknown hands had planted the Church there (Rom xv 20), is it likely that Asia, less than half-way and parted by no necessary sea, was Christless four years before?

According to St Jerome, the hands were those of Peter; who, from his see of Antioch, had preached through the whole region of which Asia was a part —"before he came to Rome in the second year of

Claudius", that is, in A.D. 41. (Though it is quite likely that the Church of Rome was founded by St Peter, yet Jerome's date is too early for Acts xii, which is fixed by Herod's death in 44; and of the "twenty-five years" of Roman episcopacy which he gives to St Peter, the less said the better. Still, he does allow his Pope a little previous "provincial experience"!)

Then again, as touching "Asia", there are some very curious secrets. Why, on St Paul's first Journey (*c.* A.D. 44–45), when he and Barnabas arrived in Pamphylia, *did St Mark refuse to go with them any further* (A xiii 13)? This annoyed St Paul greatly; but Mark's uncle Barnabas strongly supported his nephew's action, and, later, even parted from St Paul over it (xv 39). If Mark's motive had been slackness, Barnabas would have been the last to abet him. What *was* Mark's reason?

I think it was because they had arrived at the borders of "Asia", which it was St Paul's intention to enter; that Mark knew that *someone was planting Christ in Asia already;* and that he did not approve of a course which St Paul himself afterwards learned to avoid—"building on another man's foundation" (Rom xv 20).

And this view is strongly confirmed when we come to St Paul's second Journey (say five years afterwards). This time, deserted by Barnabas, he took Timothy; and one of his first acts, again, was to attempt to enter this desired "Asia"—and again, he is foiled! "They were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they tried to go into

Bithynia—and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; and, passing by Mysia (in "Asia", where soon after we find the Church of Pergamum) they came down to Troas" (xvi 6–8).

All this is very significant. Who was that "someone", who was thus early in possession of the forbidden regions, which shortly after are seen blossoming with the Apocalyptic Churches? It was (I believe with Weiss)[1] none other than St Peter, Mark's spiritual (if not natural) father, for whom Mark would be jealous—who had not long since "gone out to another place" from Mark's mother's house. And of course, in "Asia", John was with Peter.

If this be so, nothing could be more probable than the existence of a ring of Petro-Johannine or Johannine groups (a dozen people might constitute a "church") in Proconsular Asia, well before the early "fifties", to which period I assign the Apocalypse; sufficiently long before, indeed, to admit a decline from "first love"—which six months might bring about, for that matter. And we need not worry about St Paul's Ephesian work. In a province the size of "Asia" and teeming with Emperor-worship there was room for a dozen Apostles and scores of "churches". The persecution, Jewish and Roman, indicated in the Apocalyptic Letters, would necessitate secrecy; which would conceal many groups, not merely from the authorities, but from each other. And if St Paul, with his revolutionary ideals, was judged a questionable

[1] So at least he seems to believe. See the able and sensible remarks of Dr. Bigg, *SS Peter and Jude*, Introd., § 8.

influence for these mainly Jewish bodies in their nascent stage, they must have been fairly mature to admit of his coming when he did.

If St Peter's work in "Asia" thus preceded St Paul's, at what time in his life did he embark upon it? The paucity of data makes chronology more than difficult. Yet conjecture is inviting. The natural moment for St Peter to start from Palestine for systematic work abroad would be soon after his "exodus" from his distinctively-Petrine function. This latter, as our knowledge of the date of Herod's death tells us, took place in A.D. 44.

This was in every way a paramount year in the fortunes of the Apostolic Church. It marks her final concretion as "Catholic"; the resignation of her human creator; and the solemn entry of his great Complement, St Paul, upon the work that turned her Catholicism from a name into a fact.

And lo, scarcely has St Paul reached, on his first Journey, the borders of "Asia", than St Mark's desertion imposes a mysterious check. All this suggests that SS Peter and Paul set forth upon their travels at the same epoch—and in the same direction; that Peter and John, by the ruling of the Spirit, forestalled the Apostle of the Gentiles in those parts of the Asian Peninsula[1] in which Wisdom had willed them to break the fallow ground; and that among these, the special objective was that strip of western coastland, which within a few years was destined to become the sphere of the Churches of the Apocalypse.

Finally, about A.D. 54 (John's Letter already written?) comes St Paul to Ephesus at last. He is

[1] "Through *them* that evangelised you in the Holy Ghost," 1 P i 12.

now free to preach and teach as he will and can, to "reason daily" in Tyrannus' school, to work miracles and exorcise; burn pagan books and deal confusion to Diana; for the Spirit's purpose is achieved. The "Seven Churches" are doubtless little gatherings of a few families (see Col iv 15) in locked rooms; but they have supplied a typic nucleus for that mystic message of the Spirit, sevenfold yet one, which is to inform the whole of Christendom with hope and warning against those visitations which are coming on the earth– and, as we shall see, to teach its Rock to die.

Now if Peter was in Asia when John wrote, or even if he was in touch with it from Antioch or elsewhere, it would be natural that he should figure, either directly or indirectly, in John's Letter; and still more so if they had been, or were, associated in Asian work. And if John had a message for Peter, such a Letter might well provide an opportunity for its delivery. Indeed the circumstances might have been induced with a view to it.

For we are not at all in bondage to the idea (*pace* St Irenæus and after him Eusebius, who mis-date the whole occasion by more than forty years) that St John was in Patmos by banishment. Even if he was, it only suggests that he had been in Asia previously. It is certainly likely that he had early experience of persecution (Jn xx 4). But all we know for certain is that he was there "for the Word and witnessing"[1]—that is, to receive and write the

[1] Rev i 9. The same phrase is used in i 2. Quite possibly διά may imply simply business or purpose.

Book. The impression is that while in Asia he received a Divine command to go into retreat at Patmos for the purpose. It was the first stopping-place for Rome, and to sail there from Ephesus or Miletus was the simplest thing in the world.

But one thing is very certain: the main purpose of the Apocalyptic commission was the exhortation of Peter, and, in Peter, of all those whose faith was to be tried in the destined (Neronian) Tribulation. This fact is unaffected by questions of time and place. Such questions, as we have seen, fall easily into line with it, just because it is true. I may be wrong in my theories. But the fact remains. For the Book is saturated with Peter.

CHAPTER XIX

John's Warnings to Peter

"Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments—lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" Rev xvi 15

We now approach the Book itself. And at the outset it may be asked why, if St Peter is to be warned or exhorted, it should be in a public Letter. Could not the Spirit speak to him directly? Or, if it must be through John, why not in private?

For answer, why did the Lord publicly warn Peter concerning his Denial; publicly rebuke him for his attitude concerning His own Death: and, on the Sea of Galilee, put him to open shame? John's warnings are in precise line with those of our Lord; they consist in reminders of familiar phrases, flashes of old scenes, light touches upon hidden springs of memory. But from all eyes save Peter's they were veiled. There is not a hint or an allusion that any fool could discern or enemy exploit. So subtly do they lurk in the strong Apocalyptic context that he for whom they were intended, at the first suspicion of their presence, would search the Book through with the most sifting care, the most intense concern. "Whom I love, I convict" (Rev iii 19). For the Book was more than John's. It was "The Manifesto of Jesus Christ".

And more: the effect of a direct admonition from

the Spirit might fade ; but these embedded, written warnings, in the beloved script of a human friend, would remain. Every word of the Letter would be a household word in the Church, known by heart ; how often would Peter himself "read it aloud" (Rev i 3) and, teaching from it, teach himself ! What wiser, better way could have been devised, to reach his heart—and keep it to the End ? Upon us, heirs of the same Scriptures throughout the ages, how else does God impress His will ?

To the exhortations in question. All are stern and loving ; the great bulk of them are pointedly directed to some one person ; and their urgent instance is in all cases towards faithfulness, much feared-for, under a coming persecution, in which the alternative is to be Emperor-worship or martyrdom. The person is evidently a highly-important one, who has shown great faithfulness, and has declined from it, at least incidentally.

The first thing that strikes us is the constant use of the singular number. The Letters to the Churches are in each case addressed personally to their respective "Angel", whose individual conduct represents and involves those under his charge ("Remember from whence *thou* are fallen", "I have this against *thee*", "I will give *thee*", "*He* that overcometh, I will give *him*") ; and throughout the Book there are not infrequent sudden reversions to an individual, urging his attention, his wit in decoding cipher, his faithful and enduring patience, and his blessedness in attained reward : "Blessed is he that readeth aloud the words of this prophecy" (i 3) ; "Blessed is he that keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked,

and they see his shame" (xvi 15); "He who has understanding, let him count the number of the Beast" (xiii 18); "If anyone has an ear, let him hear" (eight times); "If anyone is for captivity . . . if anyone kill with the sword" . . . here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (xiii 9, 10); "Here is he that has wisdom: the seven heads", etc. (xvii 9); "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first[1] resurrection" (xx 6); "Blessed is he that keepeth the words of this prophecy" (xxii 7). If, as seems obvious, these are pointed allusions to someone in the writer's mind, the person thought of must be a very important one.

In the Title of the Book we gather that it is to be read aloud, some particular reader being suggested (i 3). The Letters to the Churches depict an individual who, except in the cases of Smyrna and Philadelphia, has in some way lapsed from love and loyalty. Details vary; but there is always lapse. In the case of Ephesus there is unwearied work, patience, and hatred of a Gnostic sect (whose abhorrence by Peter we learn in 2 P ii 15); but there is a decline of "first love": "Remember *from whence* thou art fallen, and do the first works". In Pergamum there has been loyalty and no "denial", but weak tolerance, again, of this sect. In Thyatira, even increasingly-faithful "work", but tolerance of similar heresy. In the case of Laodicea, deterioration seems to culminate in "lukewarmness". And over all there is the shadow of coming persecution, with the warning call to martyrdom, and the

[1] Specially applicable, for St Peter's martyrdom was to precede the Parousia.

promise of glory to "him who endureth unto the End".

I do not pretend that, in any of these cases, the "Angel" is definitely Peter. But the shadow of Peter is upon all of them. From a perusal of the seven Letters a composite picture emerges, sufficiently outlined to be recognisable. Nor can we easily forget Peter's remarkable connexion with an "Angel" in his exodus-scene, and the household deeming him an "angel" when he was knocking at the door. And it is noteworthy that the references, which occur in "clusters" like those of the Gospels and Acts, become more frequent as we read through the Letters until they culminate, in number and in personal colour, in the final case of Laodicea; where we have a picture in clear focus.

ii 5 "Remember *from whence* thou art fallen—and do the *first works*"	The first note; indicating a highly-exalted former position; its faithful discharge; and its abrogation
17 The "*white Stone*" (ψῆφον) and the "*new Name*"	Allusion to the "Rock" and the "new name" Peter?
14 "The teaching of Balaam"	2 P ii 15 "the way of Balaam" (applied to the same heresy)
20, 24 "To commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols	A quotation from the Jerusalem Congress: "that you abstain from

. . . I cast upon you *no other burden* "	things sacrificed to idols, and . . . from fornication " ; " to lay upon you no greater burden " (A xv 28, 29). Nothing could be more significant, in view of the recent act at Antioch
26, 27 " He that keepeth My works unto the End, to him will I give authority over the nations ; and he shall shepherd them with a rod of iron "	Christ's answer to Peter, " You shall sit on thrones " (Mtt xix 28). And " Shepherd My sheep ". The distinctive authority points to an Apostle
iii 1 " Thou hast a name that thou livest—and thou art dead "	There was no name like Peter's. Such words would cause him to think deeply
2 " Be thou watchful, and *consolidate* the things that *remain*—which were ready to die. For I have not found works of thine made complete before my God "	" Simon . . . consolidate (the same word, στήριξον, only used in the imperative in these two places) thy brethren ". Peter's special command, " Watch " (Mk xiv 38). The life that " remained " to Peter, censored in the light of its earlier promise

3 " Remember how thou *hast received*—and didst *hear ;* and keep it "	The great Commission has left a life-long obligation
" If thou shalt not *watch,* I will come as a *Thief*—and thou shalt not know *what hour* I will come upon thee "	(From the Petrine Parable) " If the householder had *known in what hour* the *Thief* would come, he would have *watched* " (Mtt xxiv 43, L xii 40)
4, 5 " Thou hast a few names which did not defile their garments " . . . they shall walk with Me in white robes . . . " He that overcometh shall be clothed (*περιβαλεῖται ἐν ἱματίοις*) in white garments "	" He girt his garment about him ", Jn xxi 7 ; " Put on thy garment " (*περιβαλοῦ τὸ ἱμάτιον*) and " follow Me ", A xii 8. For the " cluster " of the " Thief " with " garments ", see Rev xvi 15
" and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels "	" Him will I confess before My Father ", Mtt x 32 ; " before the angels ", L xii 8 (these promises are followed by " But whoso shall *deny* . . .")
7 " These things saith He that hath the *Key* of David—He that openeth and none shall shut—and shutteth, and none openeth "	Quoted from Eliakim's and St Peter's Commissions, Is xxii 22, Mtt xvi 19

8 "I have given before thee a Door opened, which none can shut . . . thou didst not *deny* My Name"	The usual Petrine "Door" and "Denial"
11 "I am coming quickly! hold fast what thou hast—that no one take thy crown"	The Parousia must find him a martyr—and it is near! "What thou hast", and "thy crown", point to the unique greatness of the person addressed
12 "He that overcometh, I will make him a Pillar in the Sanctuary of My God"	The Rock; called a Pillar in Gal ii 9; and Eliakim, type of Peter, was to be "a Nail" in the Temple. See Peter's own "living stones" in 1 P ii 5
"And he shall *go out* thence no more"	All "Exodus" (from Function, A xii 17; from life, 2 P i 15; cp his "going-out" after Denial) is to be over for ever, for Peter
iii 14 "These things saith the Faithful and True Witness (Martyr)"	Petrine Parable begins "Who then is the Faithful and Wise Steward?"

16 "thou art lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot" (this last thrice repeated)	Peter, between the "fire" and the "cold", "Warming himself—towards the Light" (L xxii 56). St John mentions that "it was cold"; and expressly mentions "warming" thrice (xviii 18, 25). The seeming triviality of the cold and the heat, at such a moment, is what Peter would remember most vividly
17 "Thou sayest, I am rich, and have need of nothing"	Peter is relying on his old spiritual (not Temporal!) greatness
"And knowest not that thou art . . . naked . . . buy of Me white *garments*, that thou mayest *clothe thyself*, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest"	His "nakedness" and "clothing himself", in the ship, and in prison. See all this repeated in Rev xvi 15
19, 20 "As many as I love, I convict and lesson. . . . Behold, I *stand at the Door*, and *knock*; if any man *hear*	Plainly an important person. Peter "standing before the door, and knocking", when Rhoda "knew his voice", and

My voice, and *open the Door*"	they "opened the door". Also the Petrine Parable —"that when He knocketh, they may open to Him". Also Peter "standing at the door without", before Denial, and the damsel admitting him (Jn xviii 16). See, for Doors, p. 196
"I will sup with him, and he with Me"	Petrine Parable: "He shall make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them"
21 "I will give to him to sit down with Me in my throne"	In L xxii 30 (just before "Simon, Satan asked", etc) the Lord says "That you may eat and drink with Me at My Table . . . and you shall sit on Thrones". In Mtt xix 28 this is in answer to Peter's "What shall we have, then?"

If in any of these cases I have indulged fancy (and I have tried to be very severe with it) it is due to that intense sense of Peter throughout, which by now the most unimaginative reader cannot fail to have caught. It will be observed how the parallels increase in number and significance as the Letters unfold, until in the last three they are practically continuous—and in the last case (Laodicea) cul-

minate in something like a portrait. As we find the old familiar associations crowding around us—the Thief and Garments and Nakedness, the Key and the Door and the Knocking—it is as though the invisible Peter "stood without"; we "know his voice", and, like Rhoda, "confidently affirm" that he is there.

I would now call attention to the insistent refrain of each Letter: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches". By now I trust we shall have grown so sensitive to St John's undertones that one point will not be beneath notice. Eight times our Lord[1] uses this phrase, and eight times St John—once at the end of each Letter, and once later. No other writer uses it at all. St John, however, in all cases makes a "slight" variation. He alters our Lord's "*ears*" into "*ear*". In the Letters, this prepares us for individuality of allusion.

But in the eighth, and removed, and last, use, in xiii 9, he startles us into certainty. He has just drawn his famous picture of the coming Neronian persecution. And he suddenly breaks off thus: "If any man[2] hath an ear, let him hear. If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goes; if any man kill with sword, with sword must he be killed! Here is the patience and the faith of the saints".

Passing over the difficult interpretation of the "captivity" clause (which applies variously both to Nero and his Christian victims) St John's train of thought is thus. He has been describing the persecution, with Peter in his mind; he breaks off to say, thinking of Peter, "If any man hath an ear",

[1] Doubtless always with Peter in mind.

[2] Altering his sevenfold ὁ ἔχων οὖς into εἴ τις ἔχει οὖς.

etc ; then, suddenly, the "ear" suggests the "ear" of Malchus, and the words of the Lord's rebuke. And the resulting thought is this : Peter is not to resist persecution, as he did when he cut off Malchus' ear with a sword, and drew from his Lord these very words, "All they that take the sword must perish with the sword" (Mtt xxvi 52). The association is delicate but irresistible.

For all John's exhortation is to martyrdom. Does he crave a sea of blood ? or is he shouting his encouragements at one great agonist, jealous for one crown whose loss would crucify his Lord for ever ? We have no further hint of Peter until the opening of the Fifth Seal, which depicts those already martyred (among whom would be Stephen and James) "resting yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren—who should be killed even as they—should be fulfilled" (vi 9–11). Then, under the Sixth Seal, these later martyrs are seen ; clad in their white Blood-washed robes, they have "come out of the Great Tribulation" (Nero's persecution) and are "shepherded" by the Lamb for evermore (vii 9–17). Would the most illustrious of "fellow-servants" be among these ? There is no hint or allusion (see, however, iii 5) ; but we can feel the thought.

The Seals, however, are only the Programme of the Apocalyptic action. It opens with the Trumpets, which depict the Doom of Jerusalem (viii–xi). Then follows the "War in Heaven", resulting in Satan's expulsion to earth, to do his worst (xii 1–12). Enraged at the escape of the Judaean Church ("that which hindered" the manifestation of the Nero-

Beast,[1] 2 Th ii 6–8) from doomed Jerusalem, he vows vengeance upon the rest of the Church. Looking across the Mediterranean Sea, he raises up Nero as Persecutor (xii 13–xiii 1). Nero, a moral resurrection of the sword-smitten Caligula (xiii 3, 12, 14) now come to his zenith of wickedness, has yet three-and-a-half years to reign (xiii 2–5). During this time, served by the sorceries of imperial priestcraft, he deals death to those who refuse to worship him as God (6–17).

It is at this point that we get another "cluster" of Petrine glimpses. For it is this "Great Tribulation" that is destined to be Peter's crucible. The first is the pronounced allusion to the ear of Malchus, with the quotation from our Lord's rebuke, of which we have already spoken (xiii 9, 10); it follows immediately upon the statement that the worshippers of the "Beast" will be those "whose names are not written in the Book of Life". In the same context is the hint as to the Beast's name, which for obvious reasons had to be conveyed cryptically: "Here is wisdom! He that hath understanding, let him reckon the number of the Beast. For it is the number of a man; and his number is—Six hundred and sixty and six" (18). And then, in xiv 9, 10, "If any man worship the Beast . . . he shall be tormented *in the presence of the holy angels*, and in the presence of the Lamb"—a fusion

[1] Judaism could not be destroyed until the sacred nucleus within it (τὸ κατέχον) "got out of its midst". All the floundering guesses at the meaning of this simple passage would have been saved by a reference to the cases of Sodom and Egypt; to Isaiah lii 11; and to 1 Cor v 2, 2 Cor vi 17, Rev xviii 4. Satan's object in the Roman war upon Jerusalem was the destruction of the Church within her womb.

of the Petrine contexts Mk viii 38 and L xii 9; and "Here is the patience of the saints . . . Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth . . . that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them" (xiv 12, 13); and finally the picture of these victorious martyrs in Heaven (xv 2). The prominence of Peter in all this is purely implicit; but it may be inferred from previous data.

Next follow the Seven Vials, which denote the calamities that befell Rome during the closing years of the "sixties". It is the Sixth Vial that announces "Har Magedon", the spiritual name for the conflict between God and the massed forces of Roman impiety (xvi 14, 16); and this section is startlingly interrupted by a parenthesis more palpably Petrine than any in the Book: "Behold, I am coming—like a Thief! Blessed is he that keepeth awake—and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame!" (15). This is a blend from the two most sternly Petrine of the Letters to the Churches, those to Sardis and Philadelphia (iii 3, 18); and strikingly evidences both the unity and the Petrine pointing of the Book.

Follows the dirge over Babylon-Jerusalem (xviii); a vision of the spiritual "war of Har Magedon", the fate of Nero, and the victory of the Lamb (xix 11–xx 3). Then come the great unseen events which close the Hebrew Age and inaugurate the Christian. Satan is "bound", i.e., his power is restrained[1]

[1] The quicksand of conventional eschatology has been the failure to see that vv 7–10 *are parenthetic*. They voice the Seer's glimpse of a distant day when the powers of evil will break through the long restraint of the Christian *régime* in a last revolt—which will be finally suppressed. This is the only (overt) prophecy of Scripture which still awaits fulfilment. Is the time at hand?

indefinitely (xx 1–3); the Nero martyrs are rewarded, and the dead of the Hebrew Dispensation are judged (xx 4–6, 11–15); and, in a "New Jerusalem", a Christian Heaven enters into close relation with a redeemed earth (xxi–xxii 5). Into this pure City no one who is "fearful" can enter! (xxi 8).

Lastly (xxii 6–21) comes a peroration, urging the nearness of all the events of the Book (6, 7, 10–12, 20) and their vital import to the "individual" contemplated; who stands for all, yet all the more points back to one! "Blessed is *he* that keepeth the words of the Prophecy of this Book!" (7). So short is the time, that present character almost discounts contingency: "*He* who is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness (or violence) still—and *he* who is holy, let him be holy still!" (11; it is like "Sleep on now!") "Behold, I am coming quickly—and My wages with me, to requite to each as *his* work is"; "The Spirit, and the Bride, say 'Come'"—as the Lord said to Peter on the water; "and *he* that heareth, let him say, 'Come'; and *he* that is thirsty, let him take the water of life for nothing" (17). Seven times in seven verses is this "individual" thus mentioned.

And "*if any man* add" to the words of this Book, its calamities will be added to him; while "*if any man* take away" from it, God "shall take away *his* part" in its rewards. For the Book was to be the universal chart of Christ's people in a closing age. Who could be conceived as tampering with its sacrosanct text, if it were not one in very high authority, whose emendations would be believed? one whose responsible place it was to circulate it,

to "read aloud" from it and teach by it? Who can dream such a thing of St Peter? Yet who could have surmised him in our Lord's warning, "Whosoever shall deny Me?"

And indeed the whole conception of the lessoning of Peter, First of the Apostles and Spirit-anointed Maker of the Church, must have amazed progressively any reader not awakened from that gentle spell, under which we confer apotheosis on God's instruments before their time and despite what is written. Nor is the part of devil's advocate a grateful one. Yet I can but set down, in outline, my vision; should then the delusion prove to be on my own side, I can ask no more than grace of blessed Peter on the plea of the veneration in which I hold him; and the compassion of him who has succeeded in proving so happy a negation.

In the meanwhile, let us re-assure ourselves with the thought that St John crowns his Encyclical—bode what it may of struggle to this spiritual son of his—with an oracle of sure and certain hope. On the foundations of the wall of God's City he saw "twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb" (xxi 14). On all the Twelve the Church is built, for all were in Peter building; now, not a Topstone over her—for that is Christ alone—but one of twelve equal plinths upbearing her, Peter is well and truly laid, glorious for evermore; for he is sealed with Christ's Blood and cemented with his own. What John, closing long years afterwards his Gospel, relates as historian,—here, closing his Apocalypse, he anticipates as prophet: the "death by which Peter glorified God".

CHAPTER XX

Peter a Heeder of John

"And we have the Prophetic Word" 2 P i 19

Now, if the Apocalypse has a personal bearing upon St Peter, and one so grave and intimate, it would seem natural to turn to his Epistles for some sign of (at least) acquaintance with it.

On doing so, we are at once arrested by a very striking suggestion of profound familiarity with St John himself. The first things we look at in a letter are the address and signature. In the case of St Peter's First Epistle, then, we find these to be in remarkable reciprocity with the same features in the Second Epistle of St John.

Let us turn, first, to that Second Epistle. Against its ascription to the Apostle whose name it bears, there is no evidence whatever. In wording and spirit, it is "own sister" to his First Letter. Nor is there the slightest reason for dating it to the end, rather than to the late middle, of the first century. Assume this earlier period.

Writing, then, we may suppose, from Ephesus, the only place where we have any tradition of him, St John begins: "The Presbyter—to the Elect Lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that know the truth". Who is the "Elect Lady"? She cannot be an

individual, for she is loved by every Christian on the ground of Christianity. She must be a Church. What Church?

No Church but one, in the first century, enjoyed such fame and importance. The Church of Jerusalem, while she existed as such, was, if any Church, the Mother; the nucleus of all Christendom; the "Woman" of whose flight into the wilderness, before the Siege, we read in Rev xii (see Mtt xxiv 15 ff). After the Doom, that fame would not apply. If the reader will grant to this postulate an act of faith, he will be rewarded by the fitting of yet another piece into the Petro-Johannine mosaic.

Now let us look at the corresponding part of the First Epistle of St Peter. We must combine i 1 and v 1, 13. It is inscribed, as we know, to the "Dispersion" over Asia Minor (i 1). But its "colophon", so to speak, is to be found at the beginning and ending of its last chapter. Combining the two, we have: "I, The Co-Presbyter, and witness of the sufferings of the Christ . . . your Co-Elect Lady in Babylon salutes you".

What is "Babylon", from which this Letter is dated; and who is "your Co-Elect Lady"? I crave another postulate. I hold "Babylon", with profound conviction, to be Jerusalem (see p. 27 ff); a symbolic name borrowed from the Apocalypse. Of all places, it would be natural to find St Peter, in the intervals of his missions at least, in Jerusalem. And "The Co-Elect Lady in Babylon"—far too imposing a designation for an individual woman—is the same precisely as St John's "The Elect Lady": the Church in Jerusalem.

We have, then, the following correlation, which the dullest eye could not overlook nor the most cynical ascribe to coincidence: St John writes from "Asia" to Jerusalem, where St Peter is; St Peter, subsequently, writes from Jerusalem to (Asia Minor which includes) "Asia"—where St John is.

Let us tabulate for a glance:

John, from Asia to Jerusalem	Peter, from Jerusalem to Asia (Minor)
"I, *The Presbyter*	"I, *The Co-Presbyter*
to the *Elect Lady.*	She in Babylon,
The children of *thine*	your *Co-Elect Lady,*
Elect Sister greet thee"	*greets you*"

No N.T. writer, other than these two great ones, styles himself either a "Presbyter" or a "Co-Presbyter"; still less "The Presbyter"—a distinguished title—or "The Co-Presbyter". Nowhere else is the word "Elect" used of a Church. Nowhere else, save in the "Woman", the Judaean Church of Rev xii, is there any such personification of a particular Church.

"The Presbyter"—"The Co-Presbyter"; "To The Elect Lady"—"From the Elect Lady"; "The children of thine Elect Sister greet thee"—"The Co-Elect Lady greets you"!

What Lady more Elect than the Church bidden by the Lord to "flee to the mountains" at the approach of the Roman eagles, the "Sealed First-fruits" of the protected Flight into the Wilderness (Rev vii 4, xiv 4, xvii 14)? Can we miss the note of mutual understanding, intimate allusion? What

more natural than that St John should write to Jerusalem, conscious of Peter there; or that Peter should write afterwards from Jerusalem to the region where John was—their mutual consciousness taking form in mutual allusive courtesies?

And note, in fine, St Peter's context: "The Fellow Presbyter, and witness of the sufferings of the Christ—the partaker, too, of the Glory about to be apocalypsed" (1 P v 1). In that late apostolic time, how many "witnesses" of the Passion were left? How many of the Apostles who had known Christ, most of whom were by now martyred or scattered over the earth, remained alive and in touch with one another? As the End approaches, Peter and John grow closer each to each; and this appeal to common experience is significant indeed. So, too, the phrase that follows. Unlike John, Peter is to die before the "Apocalypse of the Glory"; yet this, so far from lessening, will augment his share in its reward. With a world of consciousness he uses the word "witness". For a "witness" is a "martyr".

Our two "Yokefellows", then, as late as the later of these two Epistles, are in touch with one another sufficiently close and loving to be reflected in their encyclical writings. From the marked parallelism of form in their greetings, we should imagine these two Epistles to have been written and sent within a very short time of one another. If so, St John's would be the former; St Peter, in his counter-letter,

ite naturally adopting his brother's style of greeting—and the Apocalyptic name for the place from which he was writing. This may be the embroidery

of fancy. The evidence of a mutual consciousness remains hard to gainsay.

Beside this "mutuality" between 2 John and 1 Peter, there is, between 1 John and 2 Peter, another equally striking.

For the circumstances of these latter two Epistles, we are left to conjecture. The received *ipse dixit* makes one late and the other spurious. To the critical obsession, the *pis aller* of demolition is postponement. I beg leave to posit (see pp. 229 ff) that no sufficient reason obliges us either to deny to 2 Peter what it claims—namely, identity of authorship and destination with 1 Peter; or to force 1 John to the end of the century.

Certainly, the latter Epistle assumes acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel; but almost as certainly that was known by heart decades before it was published or even written. Nor is there any need whatever to drag Cerinthus into iv 3; the Church was weaned among Gnostic "antichrists" who "annulled Jesus", as the Epistle to the Colossians should teach us; and to talk, say in A.D. 90, about the spirit of the antichrist being "*already* in the world", would have been grotesque.

Indeed, the Epistle's whole attitude to eschatological developments as impending (ii 17, 18, 28, iii 2, 3, iv 1–3, 17) antedates the work to the destruction of Jerusalem. Here we have the real critical key; the right eschatology raises the boundary-post. Who that had listened with any modicum of intelligence to the Discourse related in L xix 44 and xxi would have written of the Parousia as still

future—after Jerusalem had been "compassed with armies" and "dashed to the ground"?

I suggest that this Epistle was written by the Apostle St John to his circle of Asian Churches; from their centre Ephesus; at "the last hour"; after the Apocalypse, to whose previous "chrism" of announcement its hearers are constantly referred[1] (ii 18, 20, 21, 27, 28, iii 5, 15, iv 3, v 20 etc); but shortly before the Great Persecution; probably at about the same time as this same Second of St Peter—who in his i 14 says that his death was "coming swiftly". If, then, 2 Peter be addressed to Asia Minor, we have a link both of time and setting between the two Epistles. And this will prepare us for the notable concinnity of which I speak.

The passages in question are at the beginning in one Epistle and near it in the other. In each of them the writer bases his authority upon his personal experience, *in association with some person or persons unnamed*, of the Person and work of Christ when on earth. A glance will bring its own conclusion:—

1 *Jn i* 1–5	2 *P i* 16–18
"That which We have heard, that which We have seen with Our eyes, that which We beheld, and Our hands handled, concerning the Word of life . . . and We have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the Life	"For We were not acting on cleverly-invented fables, when We made known to you the power and 'Parousia' of our Lord Jesus Christ; We had been eye-witnesses of His majesty . . . this Voice it was *We* who heard, when

[1] The keynote of the Epistle is "Ye know"; "We know".

. . . which was manifested to Us: that which We have seen and heard, We declare to you also, that you also may have fellowship with Us . . . and this is the message We have heard from Him, and announce to you "

We were with Him in the holy mount "

3 *Jn* 12

" We also bear witness; and thou knowest that Our witness is true "

Now this is not just the " We " of authority. Each of the two writers, when he chooses, freely uses " I ". St Peter has in fact just been speaking of the most personal matter conceivable—his own death, which " the Lord signified to me " (i 12–15); and St John enters upon the first person singular with his second chapter. And whenever, in his Gospel written after Peter's death, he " bears witness " to his personal experiences of old days, he always speaks in the third person singular (Jn xix 35, xxi 24).

Here then we have, on the part of two Apostles, and in similar vein, a plural witness to the old days of Christ's Ministry; and that at a late day when we may suppose the Apostolic College scattered beyond reunion over the world. Of the two who so speak we have already had reason to think that they continued in intimate collaboration till the

death of one of them. What partner, living and in touch with him, can either have had in view—but the other? We need not for a moment conclude that either St John or St Peter was writing in direct official association with his compeer. But who can fail to read the mental reference?

And now, prepared by the signs of this continued personal intimacy and by our knowledge of the veiled but undeniable bearing of John's Apocalypse upon the soul of Peter, we approach the Petrine Epistles as a whole. Can they yield us any trace of consciousness, at least implicit, of a work so vitally affecting their author; breathing such Divine concern for him; and given through so dear a hand? We cannot but expect it; so much so, indeed, that we caution ourselves against a loaded judgment.

There is little need. Certainly our previous findings provide us with a light to see by; but we find so much to see, that we need not trouble fancy. Peter seems to write with the Apocalypse in his left hand. His consciousness of the Book confirms and rewards us alike with proof of its early date, of its paramount influence upon the Church, and of its interest for himself. The light of one truth is ever both reflexive and diffusive. Twice, at the outset (alone in the N.T.) he alludes to the theme of the Book under the correct and full title of the Book itself—"Apocalypse of Jesus Christ"; and all the eschatological teaching, which forms the staple of both his Epistles, is drawn from it, often in allusive terms which cannot be mistaken. For all he writes for is to warn his hearers of the Lord's

imminent Parousia, and of the tribulations that are to attend it.

I tabulate some of the allusions in the First Epistle:—

1 *Peter*	*Apocalypse*
i 4 "An *Inheritance undefiled* . . . reserved in heaven for you . . . unto a salvation ready to be *apocalypsed* in the last time"	The sole authority for such a hope is the Apocalyptic vision of the City of God "descending from heaven" (Rev xxi). Into her "there entereth nothing that defileth" (xxi 27)
7 "That the proof of your faith, more precious than *gold* that perishes though *proved through fire*, may be found unto . . . glory in *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*"	"Buy of Me gold refined through fire, that thou mayest become rich" (Rev iii 18; a highly Petrine context)
12 "Into which things angels long to peer"	The interest of the angels in man's salvation (v 11, 12, *et passim*)
13 "the grace that is being brought to you *in Apocalypse of Jesus Christ*"	The Title of the Book, i 1
18, 19 "redeemed . . . with precious *Blood*, as	The vision of the "Lamb", Who "bought

of a *Lamb without blemish*"	men to God with His Blood" (v 5, 9); "loosed us from our sins by His Blood" (i 5); "these were bought . . . to the Lamb, and . . . they are without blemish" (xiv 4, 5)
19, 20 "a *Lamb* . . . Christ; Who was foreknown *before the foundation of the world*"	"The Lamb Who was slain from the foundation of the world" (xiii 8; St Peter softens this). Followed by reference to Malchus' ear
ii 5, 9 "You also, as living *Stones*, are being built up to be a Spiritual House, to be a Holy *Priesthood* . . . a *Royal Priesthood*"	"A Kingdom and Priests" (i 6, v 10, xx 6); and the "Stones of the City" (xxi 19)
iv 11 "*to Whom is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever Amen*" (Again v 11)	"To Him the glory and the dominion for ever and ever Amen" (i 6; quoted by St Peter correctly only in N.T.)
13 "that in *The Apocalypse* of His *Glory* you may *rejoice exulting*" (χαρῆτε ἀγαλλιώμενοι)	A remarkable reproduction of a singular phrase at the Marriage of the Lamb—"Let us rejoice and exult, and give Him the Glory" (xix 7; χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν)

17 "the time is come for judgment to begin at the House of God"	The theme of the whole Book—judgment proceeding outwards from Jerusalem to Christianity and the world (see xi 18, "The time is come for the dead to be judged"; and xx 4, 12). Also the Measuring of the Temple (for destruction) before the general Catastrophe, xi 1
v 4 "When the Chief *Shepherd* shall be manifested, you shall receive *The unfading Crown of The Glory*"	"The Lamb shall be their Shepherd . . . I will give you The Crown of The Life" (vii 17, ii 10); the definite articles point to a promise well known to Peter's hearers; St James quotes the same Crown, Jas i 12—"The Crown of The Life, which the Lord promised"; such a promise is found only in Apoc.

When we examine 2 Peter, we are amazed at the cecity of commentators. As the less unflattering alternative to a dull wit, one is almost tempted to suspect them of conspiracy. Let us in any case hasten to present them freely with our key. One turn in the wards reveals the Apocalypse everywhere

in the Epistle ; and opening in turn this inner casket, we find truth like gems lying in light — the Petrinity of the Epistle, the early date of the Book on which it is based, and the previous close association of the two writers among the scattered converts of the Peninsula, to whose remembrance of their teaching such clear appeal is made.

Pope sings " God said, Let Newton be ! and all was light ". This superman of Nature was none less a seer in higher realms. In his priceless little work on " Daniel and the Apocalypse ", he calls 2 Peter " one continued commentary " on the earlier work of John. And difficult indeed would it be to find any passage where it is not so. Under a thin veil of allusiveness the Book itself is constantly mentioned and appealed to, as being already in their hands, their most precious chart for the impending days : " He has granted us *His precious and immense Promises* " ; " the *Truth which is present with you* " ; " *we have the Prophetic Word*, to which you do well to take heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, till the Day dawn " ; " *According to His Promise*, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth " (which are promised only in the Apocalypse) ; " the *other* scriptures, which they are wresting to their own destruction " (he has just been speaking of the Epistles of St Paul—and is therefore referring, not to the O.T., but to the text-book of the times, the Book with which men tampered at their peril Rev xxii 18, 19).

Based, accordingly, on this " Prophetic Word ", we have full exposition of the Apocalyptic Beast and False Prophet ; the heresies of " Balaam " and

other coming false teachers; the "Thief in the Night" joined with the "passing-away of the heavens" and the "new heavens and earth" (the new dispensation spiritual and temporal); "Sodom", and the blasphemies of the Beast—made "to be taken and destroyed", uttering "great swelling words of vanity", "seducing through lust"; the "Fire" that shall destroy, and the "scorching with great heat" (Rev xvi 9 etc); the "adulteress" (2 P ii 14); "*the* (specific) Entrance into the Kingdom" (i 11, referring to the "right to enter into the City", Rev xxii 14); and the "Thousand Years". And this highly-symbolical Apocalyptic imagery is interpreted in part with a certain crudeness and literalness, which accords with our conception of the direct mind of St Peter.

The *locus classicus* is the second half of the first chapter, where the writer recalls to his hearers his own joint ministry with John among them, with its first-hand witness to the story of the Transfiguration. This mystery, he says, was an earnest of the Parousia; and confirms the Apocalypse, which they hold in their hands as a lantern for the troublous times before them—but which is veiled and mysterious in its imagery, for it is a revelation from God.

2 *Pet* i 12–21	*Significance*
12 I intend to keep you in mind of your Parousia-hopes—"though you know them, and are consolidated in the Truth which is present with you"	The "Truth which is present with them" is the Apocalypse—through which they "know"

13–15 I shall do so "as long as I am in this tabernacle"—for its "putting-off is to come swiftly, as our Lord made clear to me"—and I shall, "after my exodus" (see p. 197) arrange for your reminding

He knows that he is to die before the Parousia—by the Lord's warning, and by many other warnings. There will therefore be an interval, during which they will still need to be reminded. For this he is making arrangements (doubtless for their instruction in the Apocalypse)

16–18 For "*we*" were not romancing to you, when *we* told you about that former "Parousia", the Transfiguration. This "we" saw and heard, when "we" were with Him

"Tabernacle" and "Exodus" (L ix 31–33) and the Lord's prediction of his death, suggest the Transfiguration; of which he and John, its only surviving witnesses, had told these Christians —as a type of the Parousia

19 And you and I "have (the surer on this account) *the Prophetic Word!*"

The Transfiguration guarantees the Apocalypse—and forms the model of its first Vision! (The A.V. reads as though he meant the O.T. Prophets)

"Take heed to it—as to a *lamp* shining in a squalid place—until *Day dawn*, and the *Daystar* arise in your hearts"	The "Lampstands", "Stars", and "Morning Star" of Rev i 12, 16, ii 28, iii 1, xxii 16
20 "Learning this first, that no prophecy of scripture proves to be a matter of self-interpretation"	Prophecy does not explain *itself*—so the Book will need study! (Nothing to do with "private interpretation"; he is not talking about the reader, but about the thing read)
21 "For not by man's will was prophecy conveyed—ever! No; it was by the Holy Spirit that men were carried along—and from God that they spoke!"	ποτέ is emphatic, and points the reference by comparing the present with the past. "You know what prophecy always *has* been; John's, then, is the same!"
ii 1 "But there were *false* prophets too" in that olden time—"just as among you there will be false teachers"	Of old, where there were true prophets, there were false ones; so now. Men will twist the words of this Book to lead you astray. (Cp the ψευδοπροφήτης of Rev xiii 11, xvi 13, xix 20)

And this is the author who, because he refers to the Epistles of St Paul, was a forger of the second century! As though every syllable written by

either of two such fellow-agonists, at world-crisis, could not be within a month, and was not, eagerly read by the other! How long are serious students to cringe before this kind of thing? If an apostolic writer plainly declares his identity, he is a bare-faced impostor; if he hints it, he is a cunning one. Truly the holy apostles, had they been prescient of the kind of "criticism" which at long last lay wait for them—to say nothing of the reserved resources of interpretative piety—would have fallen beneath self-consciousness and despair, and never written a word.

Let us think however that their flocks, for whom they wrote, proved more intelligent. There is a "criticism" of common sense, seasoned with a little of that intuitive perception which is the concomitant of an average understanding—and whose deliberate atrophy would seem to be a point of conscience with the latter-day student of Christian archives. Those fortunate ones who have preserved this double asset will find in this Epistle the very sign-manual of Peter. They will hear his voice, as he recalls to his flock the faithful quiet friend, who with him had drawn for them so many living pictures of their beloved Master. They will feel the caution, necessary in the case of a document which riddled of Jerusalem as a harlot and of divine Emperors as "beasts", with which he points them to the inspired Book this friend has sent them, as a manual for the dispensational Crisis that impends. And they will realise that our "Apocalyptic"[1] test is a test indeed, for it is super-erogatory in its revelation.

[1] Once tamper with its eschatological unity, your New Testament will yield you nothing but chaos.

It may be objected that St Peter in his Epistles betrays no consciousness of the personal warnings. Naturally not. A priest quoting Scripture, or teaching from it, does not publicly enlarge upon its appeals to his own conscience. The Holy Spirit's warnings through John's words were intended for Peter; but they were also intended for all. They were conveyed in the language of Peter's experience and interpreted in the light of Peter's unforgetting conscience; but the thoughts of Wisdom are Catholic in their conviction, and there are as many Peters as there are Christians. Their application to Peter was veiled to all other readers than Peter. Perhaps it is now unveiled for the first time since Peter's death.

Peter, be sure, knew the Apocalypse by heart. It became his language; like St James, and the Writer to the Hebrews, and even St Paul, he wove its household words and radiating contexts into all he wrote. But where the Book spoke to his secret heart, then of a surety Peter understood. John himself, sitting tablets on knee in the Patmian solitudes, could not fail to mark the intimate pictures his stylus traced upon the papyrus roll. Were not old scenes touched upon, little fragments gleaned from incident and teaching already in very phrase traditional, and stored deep in his own memory against the Gospel he could not but write one day? Yet even John, perhaps, sounded but the surface-depth of his own instrumentality with Peter. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, as also its own hope; and God has his secrets with every soul;

nor can we know how often we are the bearers of His sealed despatches to one another.

So we arrive at the limit of our knowledge of St Peter. "They two ran together", and Peter first "entered into the tomb". And at this point I renew my double apology, first, for my long insistence on the fallible aspect of a high Apostle; secondly, for the inviolate respect I have preserved for the eschatological matrix in which I find him—and out of which, in common with all persons and principles of the Messianic crisis in which he bore part, the pickaxe of the perverter can only excavate him in fragments.

As touching the first, (a) it is impossible to make an honest study of Peter without it, seeing that after his exodus from the Acts it becomes (apart from his two Epistles) the sole *raison d'être* of his continued presence on the sacred page; and (b) it throws strong collateral light upon our theorem, which is Peter's place in the economic scheme of Christ. And as regards the second, though I have not set out to teach a new scheme of "Last Things", I cannot claim the gentle art of ignoring facts or of editing them artificially. Whether the Parousia[1] duly happened or not, the reader must judge for himself. All I postulate is the simple recognition of its position in the Petrine data.

Of course if the student objects to read the books

[1] The word means Presence; a "coming to stay"; the entrance of Christ into the world-sphere as its permanent invisible King. Whether this has been realised or not, must be left for decision to the historical judgment of the individual Christian—and to his spiritual experience.

as written, he will not follow me at all ; and then I am helpless. If I have suggested an unfamiliar prophetic programme, it is not because I am concerned to make converts to it ; I can justify it if I am asked, and whatever is true will out in God's time ; but simply because my theme demands whole Peter. Indeed, Peter unconditioned by the Parousia would not be Peter at all.

No doubt, as I intimated, those who claim the entire and exclusive heritage of Peter's power and knowledge can clear up all these difficulties for us. It is to them that we should look for vindication of the announcements which (in common with his Lord's) formed the staple doctrine which their father Peter taught, and for which he died . . . and on the count of which, as men like Renan and Schweitzer have unanswerably said, the Prophet of Nazareth stands to be judged. We, happily, are less responsible, for we do not arrogate the exclusive possession of the Truth.

Failing, then, a Supreme and Infallible Doctor and Teacher, we must fall back on those constructive human wits and instincts, those powers of induction and deduction, which as they can prove so devastating to the secrets of nature and of crime, should presumably be of some service in the exploration of the highest truth—provided we dedicate them to the inspiring Favour of Him who promised to be our guide upon that way. We have done this, as far as in us lay. It remains to piece together the shreds of simple evidence we have gathered ; and see what common sense can make of them.

CHAPTER XXI

The Bearing on the Argument

"Revealing the traces of hidden things" Ecclus xlii 19

Jesus appoints twelve persons as the official nucleus of the Society He has come to establish on earth. He invests one of them with a certain priority. Nineteen centuries afterwards, the precise nature of this priority is still in grave dispute. How is the question to be settled? The terms of the investiture are held to be patient of various interpretation, and they are fought word by word. Agreement over them seems hopeless.

There exists, however, a body of literature covering at least the three decades subsequent to the departure of Jesus, and apprising us of the way in which His arrangements were carried out. These writings claim a Divine source; and their claim is more or less admitted generally. It is to them, then, that we must turn for light on the question. The only way to determine the exact nature of the appointment is to examine its Incumbent's discharge of it; and the disposition to him, in such discharge, of his divine Overlord, his colleagues, and the Society whose officer he was to be.

But before we proceed to this enquiry, which ought to prove in one way or another conclusive, we form, provisionally and subject to it, our own theory

upon two points : the terms of the Commission, and the character of the man. With regard to the former, our finding (chs. I and II) is (a) that Christ conferred upon St Peter four Functions, all of which were common to all the Apostles ; (b) that these were vested in Peter, not by supremacy, but by representation ; and (c) that this representative priority was conferred upon St Peter in view, not of an Office, but of an Act ; that its extension was limited to the duration of the performance of that Act, and not (unless in an honorary sense) a freehold for life ; that it was, in fact, a commission to found and plant the Church, and—so far as it was in any way peculiar —nothing more.

And therefore, that if there was anything that it was *not*, it was not the appointment of a Head or Topstone for the Church, seeing that it was the creation of a Base and Foundation ; still less was it the sacring of a king ; and least of all the inauguration of a line of successors.

And as touching the character of the man, our findings point the same way. St Peter gives notable signs of grave weakness marring a noble soul. This weakness culminates in an act of disloyalty, of which he repents and is forgiven. But his Master, in departing, shows misgiving, or foreknowledge, of its renewal. We are led therefore to surmise that his appointed work will be of such a nature as to be threatened by the said weakness in minimum degree, while it affords, for his particular spiritual genius, a maximum of scope. This at once suggests, for Peter's charge, a considerable limitation, both in duration and responsibility.

And when we regard the nature of his failing, which is the unreliableness of over-self-reliance, this limitation seems to gather outline. A life-long official supremacy appears to be at once excluded; for the disability in question, while conceivably quite reconcilable with certain kinds of activity, in an organising and responsible Head would promise fatality to the whole scheme. Nothing seems to meet such a case but a representative and temporary Priority. Such a Priority, if we are right, could be useful only in view of a finite and definite purpose; and such a purpose, be it long or short in the achieving, could surely be nothing but an Act; and such an Act, it would seem clear, must be immediate and inceptive; and this for two reasons: (a) such a man, while prime in years and fresh in ardour, would be at, and do, his best; and (b) Christ's prepossession points supremely to Peter's *death*.

Here then we have at last an interpretation of Peter's Commission which gives him a responsibility ideally adapted to Peter's special qualities and defects. He is to be *the Pioneer of the Kingdom of God in the world*. Such an enterprise would give full scope for his bold initiative and loving enthusiasm; while in the uplift of its spiritual romance I see abeyance of his weakness. What, then, again, is this—but "On this Rock I will build"; "I will give to thee the Keys?"

So far, of course, all is conjecture *a priori*. Prepared but not prejudiced by it, we turn to the inspired official minutes of the Society which is to be the sphere of this problematic agency of Peter. We find our surmise verified lucidly, accurately, and

beyond a doubt. Precisely carrying out the terms of his Master's Charter as we ventured to read it; in three phases of widening extension, as pre-signified by Christ; he bases and opens the Church.

Then, he disappears from the record. The process has taken some ten years, and we understand that St Peter lived about twenty more. Yet with the close of his great work Peter drops out of the history, which proceeds to follow the fortunes of another Apostle. Not once—having hitherto almost monopolised the page—is Peter named again, except on one occasion where he could hardly have been left out—and where he makes reference, from a subordinate seat at a Council held in the very spiritual metropolis where he had once planted the banner of the Holy Ghost, to his own glories as past.

And what of his "fallible aspect"? During his great zenith he acquits himself with saintly heroism. So far as we can know him, he is magnificent in faith and prowess. But we are unable to censor him any further, for "what was become of Peter?" Yet it is soon after his disappearance that we get him, in an incidental Letter, under an instantaneous but very merciless flashlight indeed. We find him charged with a sudden and serious lapse from loyalty. And this proves arresting. For when we look up the record of his old weakness and compare, we find the two, psychologically and spiritually, identical.

Failing further direct light, we probe for "invisible rays". And lo, we find Peter bathed in them. But the light is mystical, not historical. Struck by

a few strange phrases, obviously ulterior in meaning, in the closing scene of his day of glory, we turn back these ultra-spectral rays upon his previous life as a disciple of Christ.

And we find that we have but skimmed its letter. Practically every glimpse accorded us, especially by that prince of cipher-writing St John, of that early novitiate with his Master, is full of tiny details whose very triviality is the key to their hidden meaning. These broken rays of mystery are all spiritually ominous for Peter, and all are focussed on the soul-crisis of the night of Passion.

But this crisis does not absorb them! It proves to be nothing but a lens, from which they emerge in a strong diffusion streaming onwards in the direction of Peter's future. This flood of dark portentous light pours through the last chapter of St John, until, after Christ's ambiloquial oracle concerning Peter's death, it vanishes with its medium. Under the quick-following glare of Peter's great high noon, it is swallowed up in glory. But the stream is neither spent nor broken. For through the evening shadows of his declining day it shimmers out into sight once more; and under its full lurid glow, which suffuses the great Twelfth Chapter of the Acts, Peter passes out into the night.

In this Chapter Peter seems to steal from the stage like a spirit re-enacting a tragedy. As "the Angel departs from him", and he himself "departs to another place", the scene closes in amid shadows of coming temptation and death. After this we can hardly wonder to read of the Antioch Denial. Peter is once more mere man. He has, out of the ἔκστασις

of his high enterprise, "come to himself". Fresh snares are set; and deadlier, for the time is advanced. Already he is "growing old";[1] and he knows what that may mean for any day (Jn xxi 18). His great work is done; but never sealed, until he learn to die.

But we find a friend raised up for Peter. Just at his hour of need, after the Congress, and perhaps at the very juncture of its untoward Antioch sequel, *John* has stepped into the Angel's place. Like all true friends, his help is private; he hides his hand in cipher—but our mystic light unriddles him. The Spirit in John is anxious, as was Jesus; and through John Jesus sends to Peter a veiled urgent message of warning and of promise.

And, as with Jesus, the question is of Peter's death, and therefore of his life. A bitter persecution is coming; Peter has wrought well; but what of his crown? Upon this depends his credit and his Lord's, and all the future of the Church that He has reared upon him. It is written that he will win it; but the fight is dire, and by foreknowledge not foregone; and dire his need of every weapon in the armoury of God. Already he has denied twice; will he deny again, ere the cockcrow of the "Night" that is to dawn in the Parousia? "I know thy works, and faith, and patience . . . hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!"

And so through the thunders of the Letters to the Churches every agonising thought-wave from that olden night bombards the heart of Peter, every cell of his memory is made to thrill with some

[1] ὅταν δὲ γηράσῃς.

familiar pang or heartening promise of those days of his nonage with the Lord. And the Letter, as we know, Peter learned by heart ; and to heart, be sure, whatever Peter learned, he laid ; yet what he owed to it, who can tell ?

As though for answer, comes the story of the Appian Way ; true in spiritual response to the whole protasis of Scripture, if not in form ; unaccountable without our decodings of the sacred text, but, with them, both asked and proved. For if the story was concocted, it was concocted flat in the face of St Peter's illustrious service and in direct *lèse majesté* against his early exaltation to the highest altars of the Church. No esoteric reading of Peter's " Fates " can have suggested it, for who ever heard of them ? His stars portended it, and there it is.

There is a missing confluence to all the lines of Peter's life ; for though their angles are various, their direction is one. At that final spot I see, converging, weakness and strength ; stoutness and fearfulness ; solitude and wardship ; a " carrying whither he would not " and a " stretching-forth of his hands " ; a recreant's shrift and a martyr's crown in one. The vanishing-point is outside the picture, but it is the whole perspective's soul.

Have we found it marked upon tradition's margin ? Only God can tell. Suffice it that without the story preserved for us by St Ambrose, I should have fully believed that Peter needed, and received, a last reminder : not John's, but his Lord's ; and, receiving, did passionate penance of glorious death.

To what, then, does all this darker premise

point? It points to a fact which was lucidly clear without it, but which, with it, becomes luminously so. It points with a curious irony to the fact that Peter's infallible successors are by his very fallibility disinherited, and mulcted in arrears of ages to the patient creditor, Truth. Absolutely, it proves nothing. Collaterally to prior demonstration, it brings circumstantial confirmation to a direct point. St Peter was not the Viceregent of a Society, but a Commissioner of an Act.

This was proved by Peter's broken history, one-third of which is glory and two-thirds night. But when we find the historical boundary-line to be drawn over a spiritual, we see in clearer contrast. The mantle is known the better from the "nakedness" it leaves. The specific work, for which no administrative genius was either necessary or profitable, nor even indefectible final perseverance essential, is safely done—for the Master pensions his servant's leisure with prevenient grace!

And when we tally that work with the Charge laid upon him by Christ, we know that we have found the real Peter. Watching the Church rise upon her Foundation, we see that she cannot advance a stage without Peter. In that case, when she is grown world-wide and complex, we expect at least to *hear* of him. No. We hear of Lydia and Damaris, of Sergius Paulus and Jason and Sosthenes; but "what is become of Peter"? It is as though a scaffolding had been taken down. Or better, as though the Foundation had been concealed by the superstructure. Is he dead? Not at all. St Paul has been at work some twenty years when we have

a letter full of unabated vigour from Peter's pen—in which he calls himself a " Fellow-Elder ". We can only conclude, then, that he is essential to the building of the House, but not to its government.

Consequently we thank God for the holy and gallant St Peter, historic Atlas of the evolving Church and present glorious Pillar in the Temple of God ; but we do not elevate the plinth into an abacus ; still less immortalise such a confusion by polling for new substructures. You may bequeath an office—if you are authorised so to do ; but the devolution of a completed act is a contradiction in terms. Could we imagine the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's meeting in the Chapter-house to ballot for a successor to Sir Christopher Wren, the cathedral itself would witness against them. Upon every Conclave for the election of a new Peter the gentlest reflexion is the strongest : *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.* The silent refutation of another Rock is the existence of the Catholic Church.

And there is one significant fact, in whose light the position glares. The Pope is not the Pope, in the Petrine sense, *qua* Bishop of Rome. If the newly-elected Pope (who may lawfully be a layman) is not already a bishop, he must be consecrated as such. But *before consecration,* from the day of his election, he is, in virtue of his derivation from St Peter, " Supreme Head of the Church ", able to exercise every duty of pontifical jurisdiction, exclusive of ordaining and consecrating. Thus the Papacy is not a super-episcopate, a content of the episcopate capable of sublimation. It is a thing

entirely apart from it. It is more even than an Apostolate. It is the fresh creation, aside altogether from the grace of Holy Order, of a prior and unique quality assumed to have been resident personally in St Peter ; a sovereign authority, independent and transcendent of the laying-on of hands, infallibly legislative of faith and morals, and only in definition not Divine.

The popular notion, therefore, that the Papacy is an *ex officio* quality of whoever happens to be Bishop of Rome, is profoundly incorrect. Essentially it is not the property, as such, of a bishop at all, nor has it anything to do with Rome, beyond the fact that the episcopate of Rome is an appanage and an accident of it ; indeed, some hold that a Pope might choose to hold another see, or none at all. It is purely and simply the transpersonation of a given human individual, whomsoever, into an imaginary projection of Peter ; and not of Peter as an Apostle ordained by Christ, or even as a chief Apostle, or focus of the Apostolate ; but as a something before and behind all that, a power unconditioned by Holy Order and prepotent to it ; in fact, a Christ between Christ and the Apostles of Christ : a sort of materialised shadow of Christ, not only untraceable in any cranny of His recorded authorisation, but interceptive—in idea at least—of the flow of His ministerial unction to His Body and Bride ; that eternal and only stream, that continuous germ-plasm of organic spiritual life, for whose transmission He has ordained the laying of living hands on living heads, not posthumous re-galvanisation by co-opting.

Of all our faculties, that of wonder is the most

easily spent. But there is one mystery which never lets my sense of amazement tire. It is the *sangfroid* with which a system, enthroning such a conception, holds sacred the New Testament Canon, and inculcates it as the word and work of God. (For let us confess with due grace that, of the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Roman Catholic Church is to-day the world's sole corporate champion worth the name; though her encouragement of its honouring by intelligent examination is another question).

When an error defies self-evident facts it is hardy indeed. But when, by the apotheosis of its own written stultification, it blandly challenges the world, we are in a strait betwixt two conclusions: either it "fears its fate too much"—or a certain Scotch philosopher's cynical categorisation of humanity is too true.

PART III

CONCLUSION—THE TRUTH EMERGES

CHAPTER XXII

Peter's Real "Successor"

"And, going out, he went to a Different Place . . . And the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me . . . Saul" Acts xii 17, xiii 2

So the Commission expires in virtue of its nature. Rock and Keys have served their purpose, for all is founded and all is open. The organ, differentiated for a special adaptation, is re-involved in the Body. When again and for the last time named, Peter is called "Symeon"! This in circumstances of the utmost possible formality; publicly, in his presence, by the President at what was practically a General Council of the Church, held in the Metropolitan See of the world. On such an occasion at least one might have expected, for the "Supreme Head of the Church", the courtesy of the official title bestowed on him by his Lord!

It is another instance of the prevision of the Holy Ghost in the Catholic consciousness. Cephas was still and always Cephas, and will ever be; and James spoke naturally and without intent. But the cry "I am of Cephas" was sensed clairaudiently; perhaps already heard. So brilliant an ascendant would not be kept waiting for misconception. And Truth is ever its own prophylactic against the ills to which it is heir. Or say that, like light, it convicts by shining.

And the precise significance of this resignation—without compunction I repeat myself—must be left clear beyond possibility of mistake. *Its occasion is not Peter's death.* It is the charge, not the functionary, that dies. The Commission is not subjective, but objective: conditioned and determined, not by the agent, but by the act. Otherwise—did not the finite nature of the work preclude it—the notion of a succession might have been conceivable. It would have been a mere error.

As the facts are, it is a fatuity. The twenty years of unchronicled survival are its abortion. They constitute an abyss, across which a first "successor" could no more claim touch with Peter, than a millionth; and neither any more than a message could be received at New York if the Atlantic cable had come unhitched off Liverpool. The venerable entail of the Papacy, so far from speaking for it, only accumulates the pity of it. In the pedigree of a fable—could a thing be more than false—I see nothing but a geometrical regression from the truth.

But in the alleged birth-certificate of the Papacy there is more than mere hiatus. There is dispossession in favour of another. For a "Successor" to St Peter has been in the field, through whom this line neither finds nor claims derivation; nor any other: for he was half of Peter.

There is an irony in St Paul's complete and dramatic supersession of the still-vigorous Peter, which stabs the corpse of the Roman claims. For

Peter's exodus is immediately followed, in the official history, with a deliberation which no one can ignore, by the solemn ordination ("Separate Me") new-naming, and sending forth, "by the Holy Ghost", of Saul of Tarsus. And this Saul from that moment steps into a far more than Petrine prominence in the record; and, through sixteen remaining chapters of complete monopoly, founds churches, opens doors, binds and looses, dispenses and judges, heals and raises from the dead, harangues and works signs and wonders, and asserts his personal authority and claim to allegiance more boldly than any Rock—no man forbidding him!

Popes and Anti-popes have met and thundered. But two Universal King-Bishops at the outset of the dynasty, reigning jointly for a score of years in composed neutrality, without mutual fulmination either of battle or bull; the one referring to the other as "our beloved brother Paul"; and one, moreover, neither Bishop of Rome nor figuring in the genealogy of Sovereign Pontiffs: there must be something wrong either with the Petrine Supremacy or with its modern installation.

And, to raise irony almost to the point of humour, there is between the two figures an arresting and sustained resemblance, in act and function and experience, which seems to embellish the *reductio ad absurdum* and play with it. St Paul speaks sharply of budding Ultramontanes who said "I am of Cephas"; one could imagine them retorting, "You yourself are a travesty of Cephas!" Let us see how Paul seizes Peter's "Fisher's Coat"—

while he still lives—and "girds it to him", and wears it. A tabulation, again, will be best.

St Peter	*St Paul*
Begins under a shadow (Denial)	Begins under a shadow (a Persecutor)
New-named (Rock)	New-named (Paul, the Little, as being a second Peter)
The risen Jesus appeared to him personally (1 Cor xv 5)	The personal Damascus manifestation
His Housetop Vision, thrice related (A x 9–16, xi 4–10, xv 7) bidding him preach to Gentiles	His Conversion-Vision thrice related (A ix 1–9, xxii 6–11, xxvi 12–18) bidding him preach to Gentiles
Cornelius bidden, in a vision, to send for him (he being in trance)	Ananias bidden, in a vision, to go to him (he being in blind ecstasy)
His Housetop Vision marked with the sign of Three	His Apocalypse in Arabia marked with the same sign ("I besought the Lord thrice")
"He that wrought for Peter"	"wrought for me" (Gal ii 8)

Judged Simon the "Magus", in the Holy Ghost; "fastened his eyes" on the lame man (viii 20, iii 4)	Judged Elymas the "Magus", "filled with the Holy Ghost", "fastening his eyes on him" (xiii 9)
"Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said" (iv 8)	"Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, said" (xiii 9)
Began his work in close connexion with John	Began his work in close connexion with John Mark
First Sermon at Pentecost, opening door to the Jews—quoting Ps xvi 10, expounding it of Christ, and preaching remission of sins. Success of Sermon	First Sermon at Antioch, opening door to Gentiles—quoting Ps xvi 10, expounding it of Christ, and preaching remission of sins. Success of Sermon
Miracles in Jerusalem; heals a man "lame from his mother's womb", "fastening his eyes upon him"; the man "leaps and walks"	Miracles at Iconium and Lystra; heals a man "lame from his mother's womb", "fastening his eyes on him"; the man "leaps and walks"
Repudiates worship of Cornelius: "I myself also am a man"	Repudiates worship of men of Lystra: "We also are men"
Three widening extensions of inaugurative work	Three great widening missionary journeys

"Goes throughout all parts" (A ix 32)	Pastoral visitations (xv 36 etc)
Works three recorded miracles: the first, a lame man. Two are miracles of healing; one, of raising from the dead. The latter takes place in an "Upper Chamber"	Works three recorded miracles: the first, a lame man. Two are miracles of healing; one, of raising from the dead. The latter takes place in an "Upper Chamber"
Special miracles of healing and exorcism, by his shadow	Special miracles of healing and exorcism, by "handkerchiefs and aprons"
Simon Magus seeks to imitate his power. Judgment follows	The maid with the spirit of divination, and the sons of Sceva, seek to imitate his power. Judgment follows
Beaten by Sanhedrin	Beaten at Thyatira
Imprisoned; prison-doors miraculously opened in spite of "keepers"; finally "let go"	Imprisoned; prison-doors miraculously opened in spite of "keepers"; finally "let go"
His martyrdom predicted under form of "binding with a girdle" (Jn xxi 18; A xii 8)	His martyrdom predicted under form of "binding with a girdle" (xxi 11)

A violent impulse—"smites" Malchus	A violent impulse—cries to High Priest, "God shall 'smite' thee" (A xxiii 3)
Seven speeches in all recorded	Seven speeches in all recorded
The history leaves him in the prison (episode) "between two soldiers, bound with two chains"	The history leaves him in prison (A xxviii 20, 31) or chained to a soldier
Traditionally martyred under Nero	Traditionally martyred with him

A glance at this table will suffice. It is not to be discounted on the ground that some of the parallels may be coincidences. The portrait of St Paul is deliberately drawn over Peter's. Commentators do not appear to notice it; but Ernest Renan did—and turned it to his own unbelieving account. Christ's enemies sometimes understand Him better than His friends, as Pilate grasped the fact that He was a King; "who so blind, as My servant?" Certainly this "composite photograph" of the two Apostles argues either that St Luke was trying to glorify one by assimilation to the other, or that, in the mind of the Spirit, the two are, in some sense, one—and that one very much more Paul than Peter.

For the new quasi-Rock, who seems to rise out of Peter's defection and to increase with Peter's decrease, and whose acts and writings monopolise three-fifths of the Acts—and, from Acts xiii, three-

fourths of the remainder of the New Testament, and one-half the whole of it, always speaks with profound awe of his own call as a direct act of God, and of himself as trustee of that crowning mystery of the ages which had awaited his agency from the beginning—the extension of Israel's new-born mercy to the world. Twice he claimed to be "not one whit behind the very chiefest Apostles", "the overmuch Apostles" (2 Cor xi 5, xii 11). He preached a Gospel taught him "not of man, but of God". The deposit of the Eucharist itself he had not had of those who witnessed and partook of its institution, but had "received it of the Lord" in the third heaven (1 Cor xi 23) as also all the doctrinal truths of the Faith (xv 3 ff). He had been rapt into Paradise itself and heard unspeakable things. He was entrusted with a mysterious and awful power of punishment (1 Cor iv 21, v 5; 2 Cor xiii 3, 10).

To him Peter, and "those who were reputed to be something (whatever they were, it makes no matter to me—God accepts no man's person!) had super-added nothing" (Gal ii 6). He accompanied "his Gospel" with the alternative of anathemas, which even angels should incur if they tampered. As did never Peter, he bade men "Be imitators of me"; "mark them who so walk, as you have us for an example". He claimed to be spiritual father of the whole Gentile world, relegating Peter to the "circumcision". He put James and the brethren of the Lord before Cephas (Gal ii 9; 1 Cor ix 5); he "resisted Peter to the face, because he stood condemned"; he deplored the Corinthian cry, "I am of Cephas", and protested that ministers were

nothing and Christ everything; and he opened many doors after Peter, and became the foundation of many churches.

That Peter and Paul served God in mutual love and perhaps more, I could never doubt for an instant; the vein of Paulinity in St Peter's First Epistle has ever been evident; and in his Second he seems to show an almost humorous good nature, which, if I read St Paul's temperament rightly, must have been not inconsiderably taxed. Yet among eleven mentions of Cephas, in the first Paul condemns his over-cultus, in four he claims to be his peer, in one he puts him second to James, in one to himself and Apollos, and, in one, to himself; and in two (not to mention certain forcible innuendoes in the Epistle to the Galatians) he flatly opposes him. And all this great and somewhat self-conscious high-headedness in relation to Peter looms and grows out of likeness to Peter; as though Peter's image, on the screen of a lantern, were to magnify into Paul's.

What we are to understand is surely clear already. *Peter and Paul are Complements.* They form the last of the "Double Stars", with which Scripture is studded from the beginning. As Jeremiah foretold, "I will send for many Fishers, and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them . . . out of the holes of the rocks" (xvi 16); so the Fisher of Israel was succeeded by the Hunter of the Gentiles. Again and again was this supersession by Paul foretold to St Peter by his Lord. The Parable of the Vineyard ranks the labourers of the third and the eleventh hours (before the Parousia) together. "The first

shall be last, and the last, first". "Unto this last, even as unto thee". Peter is not to take "the highest room, lest a more honourable man be bidden, and the Host say, Give this man place" (L xiv 8).

Because "in Christ is neither Jew nor Gentile", therefore you cannot separate Peter and Paul. They are the hands which join two dispensations; in them Israel and the world embrace; of their union is born the capital purpose of salvation. Their natural rivalry is the explosion of union. By divine call and solemn mutual pact, Peter is the Fisher of Israel, Paul the Hunter of the world; if the old suspicion of fifteen centuries flicker up between them (and how marvellous their fellowship in Christ!) it is but that in their atoning persons it may die. The partition of the work is sealed with "the right hand of communion"; we read of no trespass, because the common end is unity; if the shepherds go different ways, it is to collect the sheep; for the Chief Shepherd was at hand.

Yet the two fields, though unfenced, are discriminate. To each other, Peter and Paul were very distinctly two. Their approaching Lord, Who would make of their diverse folds "one Flock", would seal the shepherds one in Him; meanwhile, their joint love for Him was far too great, their common hope and aim too much at heart, for any need to dissimulate the inevitable issues of their diverse labours, or let any misunderstanding feed on silence in the name of charity. Their bond was too deep, their time too short, for those insincere conventions which can dislocate a common cause. Like

the twin summits of some mighty mountain, the perspective of the ages reveals their unity.

In religious history it is ever so. At the confluence of two æons, there rises the Double Star. One conceives and one achieves ; one founds and one builds ; one sows and another reaps. And if the former agent's work be greater, the second's is larger. So Joshua evolves from Moses, Solomon from David, Elisha from Elijah ; so in Jesus and John, standing in Jordan, covenant weds with covenant and law baptises grace. The new patch will not mend the old garment ; the new skins must be provided for the new wine.

Where is the missing complementary sequel of Peter's primacy, so much quested after in these pages ? It is Paul. " What was become of Peter ? " Seek him in Paul. Peter steered the ship to the harbour-mouth ; but there she must drop her pilot, for Paul is at the halyards for the open sea. Peter's the travail and the birthpang ; but in Paul is born the long-kept open secret, the hidden mystery of the ages. Peter's charter was given on earth ; but Paul's was apocalypsed from heaven, whither he was rapt to learn its " unspeakable words ". " Son of the sorrow of his Mother " the Church, " last of all ", " born out of due time ", a second Benjamin, his increase is Peter's decrease. Like his tribarch and his tribe, mediating between his brethren, in him was vested " the ministry of the Reconciliation " between the Christ-Joseph and His alienated brothers in the world.

" Peter and Paul " ! Separation is schism. The " Acts of the Apostles " is the epic, pure and simple,

of *two* Apostles—Peter and Paul. The tri-coronation of a truncated Peter is the everlasting reproach of human intelligence. If the Church be Jewish, then enthrone Peter. If she be Gentile, then, ten times higher, papalise Paul. No need, in the latter event, to flog out of recognition one hapless text! No lack then of authority; Paul's "claims", at Paul's own mouth, would provide a mine of titular extravagance inexhaustible even to ecclesiastical imagination. "The marks of the Lord Jesus" would soon obliterate the Lord Jesus Himself.

For Paul preached himself, whereas St Peter scarcely named himself. Did he not usurp the Master's word, "Follow Me"? Had he not "the care of all the churches"? Did he not "come to them with a Rod", threatening them with a "Parousia"? did not his spirit, in his absence, preside over Councils, and "judge", and "deliver over to Satan"? Here is more than Bulls, and much fine thunder wasted; if you want a Sovereign Pontiff, give such an one a triple tiara, and a dynasty, and a kingdom.

But—the Church is not Jewish; nor is she Gentile. If she were one or the other, she is both; but she is neither: for neither exist. To Petrinise her is to Judaise her, as much as to Paulinise her would be to Gentilise her. In the first case she is fruitless; in the latter rootless. Rome worships half a Rock. Peter without Paul is a headless anti-climax, a personified irrelation; in any honour given to the one, the other must share. They are one in virtue of their duality, and are two only that they may make the disparate one.

Peter's real "successor" is not Linus, but Paul; for he was taken out of the living Peter, and all in Peter that was unique and transferable lived and died in him, fulfilling Peter while Peter lived; so that when they two died together—at the threshold of that dispensational crisis which dethroned the Law and gave the kingdom of the world to Christ—that Commission had its complete discharge, "On this Rock I will build My Church". How then can a Foundation—or half of one—descend the ages, re-laying itself—and *surmounting the building* into the bargain?

The earliest tradition delighted to unite in honour the names of Peter and Paul. Upon their joint glory the Churches of Rome, Antioch, and Corinth were weaned. "The two greatest and most righteous pillars of the Church", writes St Clement; St Ignatius will not dare to command the Christians of Rome "as did Peter and Paul"; and Dionysius, Bishop of Corinth (*c* 170) claims for his Church, with Rome, a common origin in their joint teaching (Eusebius, H.E. ii 25; 1 Cor i 12, iii 22; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, p. 358). All the many attempts, whether of critical stupidity or ecclesiastical ambition, to separate and antagonise them, are clumsy blows aimed at the foundations of the Bride; whereon are graven, be it noted, not thirteen names, but Twelve.

If you are turning Foundations into Topstones and Doors into Heads, you must come back to the Church's original conception of her Protarchy—the *Two* Heads of Peter and Paul in the Catacomb of St Domitilla.[1] Which precious archive is at once a

[1] And as discovered, not long since, in the Viale Manzoni in Rome.

priceless evidence of primitive intelligence and sound theology, and the *reductio ad absurdum* of any Visible Head whatsoever.

For the two are one ; or neither is anything. And what are both, but " ministers by whom ye believed"? And is it not written that, " whether Paul or Cephas, all things are yours " ?

The *jus ecclesiasticum*, in the meanwhile, of an Œcumenical Patriarch—another matter—I leave to the canonists with pleasure.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Practical Issue

Be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage " Gal v 1

It is, then, with very devout thankfulness that I excuse myself from the tiresome question (upon which I am frankly agnostic) whether, when, and for how long, St Peter was Bishop of Rome. For, as we have seen, it has nothing to do with the matter. Nor does the date of the appearance of the Petrine pretensions signify in the least. Place them as early as you please. Personally I should refer them, germinally, to the first Christian decades; to the spirit that showed itself, for instance, at Corinth; to the prostrate Cornelius, if you will. Most perversions of truth are contemporary; the invention of heresies unspawned in the first days has proved the despair of modern religious ingenuity. The tares, scattered behind the Sower, appeared with the wheat.

Many indications, veiled and otherwise, of the spirit of Cephaism are to be found in the writings of St Paul. The amiable school that likes to set the Apostles by the ears very naturally puts them down to personal jealousy. A saner criticism finds in them the exception that proved a rule of most charitable self-restraint. Nothing would be more likely—

especially among Judaisers, who are the real fathers of Papalism—to attract an unbalanced and factious cultus, than the glorious ascendant of St Peter. Abraham, Moses, Elijah were not immune from this cruel compliment; all pioneers want saving from their friends. Moreover, the earnest warnings and example of our Lord against the acceptance of any sort of distinction by St Peter himself, with their persistent echoes that haunted his whole career, form a sure presumption of the ambushed danger. Cephaism, be sure, is "primitive" enough. Grant it up to the hilt. Failing the *quod ubique* and *quod ab omnibus*, Rome may console herself with all the *quod semper* she can desire.

We do not, accordingly, trouble the Fathers. Once we have seen in what St Peter's priority really consisted, the question of a line of Peters no more arises than that of a string of John the Baptists. Derive the See of Rome from Peter by all means; a pedigree in possession is difficult to upset; and the order of mind that can build doctrines out of local traditions—whose disproof is of course impossible—may be felicitated upon the power of its faith and left in enjoyment of its treasure. The issue we have to join is sufficiently serious without haggling over an antiquarian sentiment. Credit too if you will in Rome, and venerate, (while noting the collocation) the tombs of SS Peter and Paul. Also, give the Roman Patriarch the honorary distinction he claims among his Western peers. The spiritual head of the world's metropolis could hardly have been exempt from precedence; nor need Donations crop up, when the sceptre migrates, to aggrandise the crosier.

But let no *jus divinum*, in any single Apostolic name, be grafted on that pan-Apostolic character, which is the property of every Bishop; nor let any "Supremacy", in such interest, be read into the delegation of an act. It would not be possible to conceive a function less transferable or a task less repeatable, than that which was laid upon St Peter. He (with the Eleven) was the Foundation of the Church—and no foundation can be twice laid, still less can it depute another foundation to be laid upon itself. He (with the rest) was the Opener of the Church—and, seeing that her gates are not shut by day or night, no man can open twice, still less transmit his keys to others to open continually.

It is forgotten that Peter's election was objective, not subjective. He was an instrument rather than an agent; not an authority super-imposed, but a thing laid down; the Church is not an evolution from him, but a concretion upon him. As absorbed in the Apostolate, he is a part of the common conduit of grace which is the life of the Church; but as the nucleus of her historic formation, that is true of him which was said of the Ultimate Rock for Whom he acted—"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid". A Society is not built in storeys, nor is the door of a House renewed every few years; so neither is a Peter in every generation necessary or possible. Nor, could we conceive it so, would such a Peter ever be a *ruler over* the Church; for ten thousand basements cannot make one roof, nor a million porters ever develop into a king; nor, as we have amply seen, could any Infallibility—even were its pretence confined to one occasion in a

lifetime—ever claim St Peter for its source or prototype; even could it derive from any human creature, or any creature at all.

For, in the first place, we have found, with all honour to Blessed Peter, that infallibility is the very last attribute (except in the sense of final triumph) that could be applied to him. Was he infallible at Antioch? He came to a better mind, no doubt; but meanwhile he was a poor "Teacher of all the Faithful"; for we are told they were "carried away by his play-acting." And, secondly, the invention of an infallible human authority is a confession of faithlessness. For the object of such an authority, we are told, is (a) to legislate for the whole Church in faith and morals, and (b) to be a refuge for the Faith in the event of the whole Church turning heretical.

This, then, is in direct contravention of two of our Lord's most solemn promises, the second of which was addressed to St Peter himself: "He (the Holy Spirit) shall lead you into all the Truth"; and "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against My *Church*". In the face of these promises, Papalism has virtually provided two Churches; for the Pope is to all intents and purposes a Church above or behind the Church. And the methods by which such a perversion is bolstered up are worthy of it; whereof I will give but one typical example. The Gradual for the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, in the Roman Missal, begins with these words: "Qui operatus est Petro in apostolatum, operatus est et mihi inter gentes". The omission of the word "*Circumcisionis*" (Vulg.) after "Apostolatum"

strikes the characteristic note of the whole propaganda from the beginning.

In fine, the recorded deposit of our religion holds no tincture of warrant for the assumption, by any Bishop, in the name of St Peter or anyone else, of the exclusive character and title of "Vicar of Christ"; seeing that the only existing Christ-Vicariate is the property of the whole Bride, devolved by her upon every Priest in his sacramental character and office; and that the special act enjoined upon St Peter was in no sense "vicarious"—except in so far as God's every delegated task is so—but simply an episode of ministerial work, certainly equalled in magnitude and importance, in their several ways, by the commissions of Moses, Jeremiah, and St John the Baptist; a work in which St Peter had not even a life-interest; much less, then, had he power to transmit or will it.

Hence our happy exemption from any hunt through ante-Nicene history for the first infant cry of the venerable falsity. For by sanctified common-sense it is strangled before its birth. It is only a gigantic spook. Far from any true parentage in Peter, it is the bastard of Peter's worser self. It is the drest-up child of all that passion for a "kingdom of this world", which Peter the saint outgrew; of that lust to be "first" and "greatest", to "exercise lordship" and "be called Benefactor", to "take the sword", which the Lord Himself eschewed and forbade and Peter all his life fought and conquered. There is nothing of the Rock in it. It is not the spirit of Peter, but his ghost; and, even so, a fraudulent materialisation.

It is the Malchus-mood, and the pride of the *υἱὸς ἥτις παιδίσκης*, that "withdraws and separates itself". It is the cradle-changeling of the Truth. It is a dream begotten by natural ambition upon exegetical bungling and spiritual confusion, by pride upon carelessness—and mistaken for a divine revelation and a sacred trust. It is the bad scholarship and worse theology of ignorant editors who have never read the archives, the wonderful and delicate word-weavings of wisdom, which they have torn and scored to piece their wilful screed—a veritable affair of scissors and paste.

Nor is the wide obsession of the centuries any argument whatever. Incurious piety, given a determined and definite propaganda, a respectable antiquity, and an imposing *mise-en-scène*, fattens on this kind of "truth". Wherever there is earnest stupidity, indolent desire to lean upon a system, and the pan-human passion for pageant, it is a matter of demand and supply. So long as the hardy fallacy lives, that reiterated autocratic assertion must be true and widely-organised uniformity irresistible, spiritual and other Kaiserism will flourish according to its resources. With a showy imperial idea a thousand years are as one day; revolutions, even made in Germany, are powerless against its calculated appeal to the conventional instincts of the human soul, its clear-cut threats and promises, its statutory answers to men's wistful questionings, its precise conditions of ban and blessing here and its awful mortmain upon the hereafter. Its glamour grows with its age and stride; and upon very opposition it breeds a spiritual conceit, a fanatical

esprit-de-corps, which in the market of human intelligence is the best advertisement of paradox. Papalism undersells the rational study of God's Word as an asset to heaven. What chance has the fair weighing of evidence against a cultus that appeals to mental atrophy?

I hear the clamorous and indignant answer, that many saints and wise men have been reared on this doctrine; and that these are days when Christians can ill afford to embarrass with controversy the path to reunion. To the former objection I answer, Why not? There is neither, I suppose, any spiritual poison in the sincere misconception of the status of St Peter, nor any proof that piety and learning are incompatible with doctrinal fallacy; at the worst they make us sigh to think what they might have been without it.

As to the second objection, I ask, What price are you prepared to pay for "reunion"? for Rome, be sure, will not pay one penny. What compromise is either to be hoped for or desired? The issue admits of none; it is sharp and absolute; it is black and white; there is nothing to bargain with. If Rome will concede nothing, who can blame her? a pound of flesh would bleed to death the whole principle that makes her Rome. As she has plainly told us, she co-bases her Papacy with the doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrection. You cannot "approach" your neighbour across a bottomless chasm; and the plank Rome proffers at present is not built for more than one at a time. While, on the part of the rest of Christendom, no compromise is possible. There is no "more or less" with two

fundamentally-opposite conceptions of the Church. Were not God in His heaven, one might call it an *impasse*.

Yet Christendom was once One on earth ; and to proclaim its schisms hopeless were to flout the power of the Holy Ghost. Christ, Who is not divided, prayed that His own might be " One Thing "—Unity—in His Father and in Himself ; and a prayer of Christ is a Divine fiat. Disunion breaks the Christian front, and helps evil ; and it is the duty of every Christian to pray and strive towards the destruction of a phenomenon which mocks and shames the essential oneness of the Body. It is with no conscious malice that Rome has fenced herself against the charity of those who cannot pay tribute with truth ; and to concede the impregnability of her party-wall would be to pay her a greater compliment than to lie prostrate at her gates ; for it would be to confess her stronger than God.

Sheerly and simply, the next move is with her ; and it is renunciation. On the face of it, this is impossible. But it is not inconceivable. The fact that " faith unfaithful keeps her falsely true " is no presumption of her final power to defeat God's plans, any more than the obstinacy of a misguided soul protects it from conversion or destruction. " Every tree which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up ". Rome stands against Christendom ; in the fourth century Christendom stood against one man. Who conquered ? The God of Truth ; Who, whether He entrench Himself in three hundred million men or one, is invincible.

At the same time, while we pray and labour for

union in this world, and refuse to grant it hopeless, we must keep a proportionate sense of what union really is. There is a naïve conceit, not to say a grave temerity, in the distress some of our busy ones are giving themselves concerning the prospects of a satisfactory answer to our Lord's prayer. "Something ought to be done about it", they would seem to say; and their wire-pullings do not advertise their grasp of the situation either in earth or heaven.

We must follow out the full perspective of our Lord's prayer for Unity. He thought more imperially than we, to whom, scarce thinking at all, "the Church" suggests the tiny handful of an incarnate generation. His prayer is fulfilled and fulfilling in a wider way and measure than we dream. In an unseen Kingdom—the true objective of our little earthly day with its strife and stress—are gathered, uncountably preponderant, the purged and perfect of the ages. There, with the shadow of Peter, all shadows have passed by; there, all are Unity, "even as He and His Father are Unity". There, for ever, is Unity in substance; our best earthly unity were but the perishable shadow and earnest of it.

Wonderful and desirable were universal Catholic communion, in this workshop of earth; yet, did it never come while earth lasts, not one fleck would pass upon the utter triumph of our Lord's prayer. While it is our most sacred duty—seeing that Charity is our most sacred law—to essay present unity by offering ourselves as its channels, the conditions of mortal flesh as we know it should leave us a clear conception of the fulness of the Divine ideal. Plainly He told us that His very Name would be a sword,

and disunion in households; let us beware then of the very thought to hang His credit upon the formal unity of any transient earthly generation.

It is this spirit that lurks, perhaps unconscious, in certain mysterious overtures for "recognition", which, if truth had anything to say, would better grace those who have done despite to it. Such excursions are attempts to force our Lord's hand, even were they not in self-respect derogatory and in policy premature. The one because, whatever a few fascinated persons may think, the sane bulk of Anglican people do not wish or intend to be committed to part or lot in a compromised falsity; the other, because, should the time ever come to bargain with a body that knows its own mind only too well, it will not be before we have composed in some measure our own divisions. Until the Roman Catholic Church revises herself and the Anglican orders herself; until Rome drops her accretions, and we can show her a front of disciplined unity and not a small wing of self-selected Anglo-Catholic extremists: commissions will be a waste of time, and *pourparlers* vain.

Meanwhile, upon this "Petrine Supremacy" is based the partition of Anglican England under alien jurisdiction, and the schismatic opposition of intruded altars to our own. In this matter we have to make up our minds. "Choose ye whom ye will serve". Sentiment weighs not two straws in the matter. No amount of veneration for the antiquity, the power, the devotion, the lore, the alleged unity of the Roman Catholic Church; no repining after the fleshpots of Pope-ruled centuries in our land;

no tenderness towards the countless myriads of souls whose proven virtue, love, and service have seemed to palliate the soil of error in which they bloomed: will find us any logical or dutiful middle point.

Writing here in London, what is my spiritual head-quarters in the Vineyard? No more than two geometrical figures, can two dioceses occupy the same space. Born and christened and bred in the English Province of Canterbury, to whom do I owe allegiance—to the Patriarch of Canterbury, or to the "Archbishop of Westminster"? Through which does Christ command me, teach me, sacrament me? He "is not divided" (as St Paul says when he censures the cry "I am of Cephas"); so it cannot be through both. It is not a question of "views", or of liturgical or ceremonial predilections; it is a question of history—as determining the devolution of the ordinance of Christ.

Whether or not there be a shred of meaning left to the tattered name of Catholic, it was from the beginning inwoven with God's first principle for the ordering of His Church: the universal equality of the episcopate, and the sanctity of its boundaries. This principle is the bedrock of our Anglican position; and devoted saints and scholars, for nearly a century, have toiled and suffered to uncover it of weeds and repair its neglected fortifications of truth and practice against the various Sanballats of our days.

We have lived to see it in new danger from within. These are days of hot and cloudy thinking, and the fog has rolled into our camp. Dillettantes are out to appropriate what heroes have won, and the salvage of logic and patience is pawned for affectation and

preciousness. "Recognition" is sought at the price of right, the foe is courted as a model, the usurper invoked as a patron. Anglicans, cleric and lay, who concede the claims of the Papacy and affect its allegiance, are not only traitors to divine jurisdiction, but foulers of their own nest and most deserving postulants for the ridicule of the world. Hypnotised into a hebetude possible only to neurotic Englishmen of the twentieth century, they are alone in their blindness to the fact that their admissions cut the ground from under their own feet; that they perish beneath the house they have pulled about them.

The utmost interest they win from Rome is pathologic. What is their "game"? Is it a bid for notice at any price? For, to the plain man, they seem to be gambling with their own good faith. In cold blood they seem to challenge our question, "If you have found a Supreme Head of the Church, which of two motives keeps you rebel against him—loaves and fishes, or simple limelight?" In either case, such a mentality is altogether worthy of the morality that can be content with it. If a man wants notoriety and has no other assets, he is perfectly free to bargain with his own self-respect. That of his clear-thinking neighbours, however, is another matter.

Be Rome what she may, she is an honourable adversary in Christ; disputing her premises, we respect the close-sutured edifice of logic she has built upon them; the prize of truth, which we contest with her in that charity which mutual love of truth ensures, is as dear to her as to ourselves. Rome is serious, dignified, and sincere. That our

Anglican Communion, which has hitherto opposed to her aggression the tactics of sound learning and sober piety, should be identified in her sight with a policy of logical *hara-kiri*, is more than mortifying to those in whose hearts Catholicism stands for something more than the latest thing in British worship of the foreign.

Our daily prayer must be for union ; is so, whether we think of it or not : for unity, hereafter if not here, is the objective of the Lord's Prayer—seeing that it is both the cause and the effect of the longed-for triumph of God's Name and Kingdom and Will. But before we undertake the active search for unity, we must discern the path to it. To follow the wrong track is to retard its attainment. The capitulation of our own credentials, the *forma supplicis*, is a sin against true union ; for it is the service of a false union which must one day be disillusioned and unlearned perhaps at the cost of pain.

Nor can the issue be composed with any sham solvent of " charity " ; for charity inheres in truth ; principles are not pawns to buy peace with ; and the bemused sense of alternative—that entirely-peculiar product of our days and their most alarming symptom—is the sheerest of all setbacks to unity : which is harmony of head and heart in Christ, and not *camaraderie* in muddle. Our Lord prefaced His prayer for unity the qualification, " Sanctify them in The Truth ".

What way is left, then ? Rome has entrenched herself. We cannot blast her from her dug-out. Centuries of immune impunity have sandbagged her against the bombs of Scriptural conviction.

Answerable, as for the proruption of Protestantism, so for the fission of Catholic Christendom, the next move is in her hands. For us, if we would "labour for peace", the only path is through the Prince of Peace.

And, though individual and interior, it is a surer path than parleys; for it leads away from phenomena to reality. He who "holds the Head" controls the Body. He who is in Christ, and he only, can put finger upon the hidden springs of the Church's ailing organism, direct by prayer and sacrament and virtue, into her nerves and arteries, the power which alone can heal the palsy of schism and the anæmia that is not charity.

The very membership of such an one in the Body, though its spiritual politics may never trouble consciously the sphere of his lowly prayer and duty, may be a greater factor to the Peace of Jerusalem than all the talking in the world. Let me see to it that I, at least, oppose no clot to the Life-Stream; that "the Word have free course in me" (Jn viii 37). For be the truth what it may, its full tide shall one day perfuse the Body; and its arteries are a pure heart and an obedient will.

Let not the present rifts and troubles of the Catholic Anglican Church distract the eye of faith from the glorious hope whose pledge is her indefectible life. "Concerning this 'Sect', it is everywhere spoken against"; let dogs bark, foxes sneer, and rats desert; let the fool who usurps God's judgment croak "The Church has failed", the spiritual snob roll off his mother's reproach, the spiritual *nouveau riche* peep from his transmontane windows and mock

the home he has betrayed. For the selfish and the craven, there is no lack of judgment amongst us; for the sentimental and the mentally-indolent, there is attractive provision elsewhere: no book-agent could rival the efficient pertinacity with which its advantages are daily cried-up at our doors—and who shall know the value of a few coins of truth?

But those of us who have searched with an undimmed intelligence the first archives of the Church of God, and recognised in them the index of the parallels between which He designed her life to lie, will give thanks for conscience of the truth. They will perceive that there are valleys of her profluence through this earth in which—though her course may be turbulent or sluggish, or her volume low—she has kept, or reverted to, this prescribed direction; and that one such tract is this our land of England. Not of any "Church of England", but of the Church as she expresses and realises herself in England, they will say, Behold at least "the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made"; "all this have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of the Lord, even the works of this pattern".

Not as "Anglo-Catholics", nor as styled by any other such modern nickname, as though in England the Faith Catholic were mixed or tempered with something English; but as sons of the Catholic Church as survivent in England, they will be proudly true to an unalloyed inheritance in the attested Christ. Unadorned as may be the seeming, threadbare the vesture of the Bride as known to them; though, like her Bridegroom, her visage be marred

and she have little comeliness: yet no hard experience has disguised her heavenly Likeness; her form is authentic, her doctrine pure. In proof whereof, has He not in these last days said to her - in the quickening and fulfilling of her sacramental function, in the risen life of penance, love, and worship that is coursing through her veins: "*Consurge, consurge, indue vestimenta gloriae tuae*"?

So believing because we see, we will ignore Rabshakeh, nor trust in the shadow of Egypt. While we retain the power of co-ordinative thought, no megalomania shall mesmerise us. We will be loyal to the authority of Jesus Christ as He wields it through the Catholic Archbishops of the Provinces of Canterbury and York –who are His appointed representatives in this land; loyal in practice, in speech, in thought: not necessarily to their opinions, for they possess no more infallibility than they claim; but to their Apostolic Jurisdiction.

And if we have an insatiable lust for subordination (for which indeed there is no noticeable *furore* amongst us at the present day) let us not bother our heads with questing after a *fourth* Order of the Sacred Ministry, for Christ appointed only three; there is plenty of scope for obedience there; and by that obedience we shall be judged.

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